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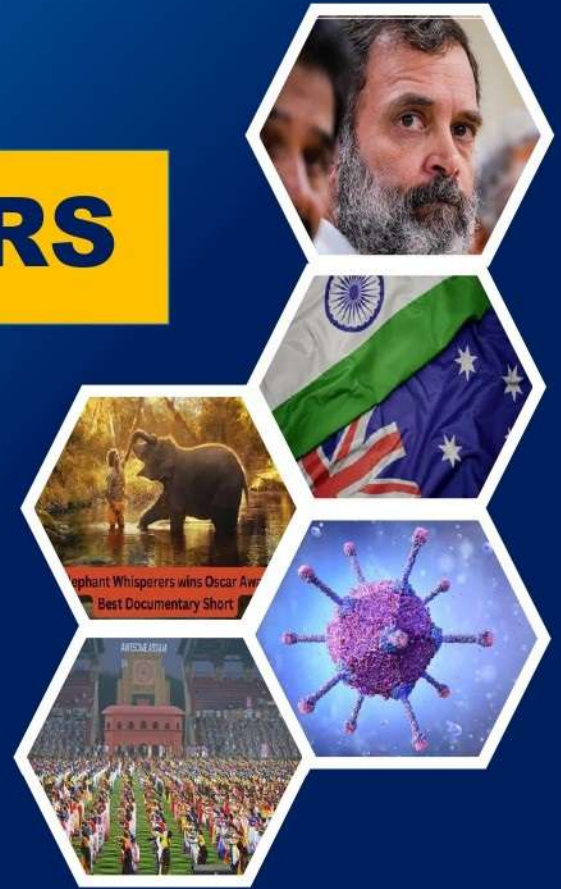
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MONTHLY MAGAZINE

MARCH 2023



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**Toppers
Recommended**



EDITORIAL

While India has been reaching out to the world with the celebrated theme of ***One Earth One Family One Future*** as a part of the **G20 Presidency** it was exhilarating to watch the world dance to '***Natu Natu***', the first original song of Indian production to have won the Academy Award. Speaking of winning, the **Russia-Ukraine war** has completed a tortuous one year without any side securing a decisive victory. Though a concrete victory may be elusive, the people on both sides sure are the losers, thanks to the world bodies with archaic structures and hollow threats. Maybe it's time to rejig the world order letting the Global South led by India and the likes have a say, because, however hard it may be to digest, India has arrived and is there to stay. Another arrival has been a pain for the US: China, Chinese Premier Xi Jinping has been on a mediation spree. Case in point, the recent **Saudi-Iran bonhomie** mediated by China, in the pipeline is Israel- Palestine peace plan. With the Dragon in West Asia, the US hegemony over the area has seen a sharp and inevitable decline. A country that doesn't respect the sovereignty of its neighbors, keeps threatening the democratic government of Taiwan goes on to become a champion in peacemaking, a textbook example of irony that fits for a crash course on hypocrisy too! Much irony was also noticed in the sphere of women's empowerment. Globally, around 1.1 billion women and girls remain outside the formal financial system, many have limited access to digital technologies. According to a report by the UNHRC, close to 1200 schoolgirls in Iran were, allegedly, deliberately poisoned to keep them away from school. Nevertheless, this year's **International Women's Day** was observed with the theme '*Accelerating Equality and Empowerment*'. Some good news near home too made headlines: Nagaland's **Hekani Jakhalu** has become the first woman MLA in the 60-member state assembly, and **Lovlina Borgohain** wins maiden World Boxing Championships Gold in New Delhi.

H3N2 has re-emerged in the towns while Covid is yet to completely subside in the subcontinent. Other things that are making news in the subcontinent are Sri Lanka and Pakistan, both the neighbors are struggling to keep their economies afloat, courtesy to the endless game of mindless politics, and of course, China. Sri Lanka has recently secured an **IMF bailout**, but Pakistan still longs for respite. An easy respite this summer seems unlikely as the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued a **heatwave** warning from March to May. Adding to the misery the IMD has also projected a below-normal monsoon rainfall due to **El Nino**. To summarize, an uncertain economic condition of the world, a shockwave in the market by the **bank failures** in the US, an impending warmer summer, and a world held hostage by an unrelenting power struggle. This is March for you!

Meanwhile, APSC has surprised the aspiring civil servants of the state in the CCE (P) 2022 conducted on 26th March. With a radical shift in the question pattern of General Studies Paper I, it sets a standard for all the upcoming examinations. The paper happens to be a skewed mix mostly of factual information garnished by a few conceptual ones from polity served with brilliant permutations of statements. Questions based on maps saw a rise while that from



Environment and Science declined. The lower cut-offs disclosed by APSC now vindicate that not many of the candidates were well prepared to play well in the court. More than 50% of the total students who appeared in the CCE (P) were not able to clear the minimum requirement in the CSAT. Now, the lesson to take home is that you cannot fixate your preparation strategy on a particular question type and thus, you should be flexible to accommodate any eventuality in the next year's prelims. Equally important is a well-cut-out preparation strategy for CSAT, although qualifying in nature, if somehow, things go south you will be out of the game for another year.

'eKuhiCA (ই-কুঁহিকা)' is an attempt at bringing to you the most important discussions of the month that are relevant to your preparation. Each issue of the magazine will contain a section namely '*In conversation with the Toppers*' and this month, we have an interview with **Shri Bijit Pathak, ACS (Rank-01, CCE 2020)** where he takes you through his preparation journey.

The name of the monthly magazine has been selected through an open competition on social media. The winning name was suggested by Plawan Dekha from Mangaldai, Darrang. Congratulations, Plawan!

Please write to us at ekuhipathofficial@gmail.com, we would love to hear your suggestions and feedback.



INTERVIEW WITH TOPPER



Current Posting: Assistant
Commissioner cum Executive
Magistrate, O/o Deputy
Commissioner, Kamrup (Metro)
Educational Background: BSc
(Chemistry) from B. Borooah
College, MSc (Chemistry),
School of Chemistry, University
of Hyderabad
Permanent Address: Nikashi,
Baksa District



BIJIT PATHAK

RANK-1

ACS, CCE 2020

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. *First of all, we congratulate you for being selected to the Assam Civil Services. How does it feel to be on the other side of the table?*

Answer: Thank you so much! It does feel good. After all the years of preparation, seeing it paid off makes me feel better.

2. *What led you to choose public service as a profession? Any specific incident or was it a childhood ambition? If it was a childhood ambition what or who helped shape it?*

Answer: I have a very humble background, and therefore always have been able to relate to the issues of the people closely. As a result, I always felt that as a public servant I could help people in a better way. So, in a way, it has been a childhood ambition.

I would say, I got the motivation from my family and they have been very supportive and equal part of this journey of mine.



3. When did you start preparing for the examination and how many times did you attempt the examination?

Answer: I took a break after my masters and once I figured everything out, I started preparing. I cleared it in my first attempt.

4. How did you figure out which books to read, which sources to follow? How helpful was Google and YouTube in your preparation? How did you separate the wheat from the chaff?

Answer: In my case, figuring out books and right material took most of the time. I had no one physically known to turn to when I needed guidance. So internet came for rescue. Luckily there are lots of platforms these days available which came of great help. So yeah, Google and YouTube did help a lot.

Separating wheat from chaff is also a tedious process. I looked for previous year toppers strategy as well as various books recommended by them and eventually, figured out what works best for me and helps me in covering the syllabus.

5. How many months of dedicated preparation did you give to the Preliminary examination?

Answer: For Preliminary examination, near about 2 months.

6. The GSI paper of the recent CCE(P) 2022 came as a shock to many of the aspirants because of the types of questions and the way they were asked. Comparing with the question paper of CCE(P) 2020, this year, we see a sea change in the approach of the commission in the examination. Keeping in view of this dynamism, what suggestions would you like to give to the aspirants?

Answer: I feel, even though it's important to go through previous year question papers, entire preparation should not rely on it. A competitive examination is not something we can predict fully and one's preparation should be able to deal with the situation such as mentioned above.

7. What was your strategy for attempting the General Studies-I paper of the Preliminary stage?

Answer: The principal strategy was to complete the core books on time and ensure multiple revision. Apart from this, solving previous years UPSC and APSC questions, and analysing those questions was another strategy that I focused on.



8. *It has been found that many people fail to make it the mains list despite doing well in the GSI paper. What according to you should be the right strategy for going ahead with the preparation for prelims?*

Answer: The Preliminary examination is more about remembering what we study but Mains exam is about recollection. Also in prelims eliminating an option might lead to correct answer but in mains one must write answers in a specific time in a well-defined space. Thus it requires adequate writing practices as well as the ability to make an answer presentable.

9. *When did you start your preparation for the Mains examination? Did you do any answer writing practice? If yes, then when did you start writing answers?*

Answer: Yes, answer writing is a crucial part of preparation. Everyone has their own writing skills and style. It's important to recognize it and work on it. I made notes during my combined preparation and started writing answers right after the prelims.

10. *What was your strategy for the Essay paper? Could you outline some basic differences in the approaches while writing the philosophical essays compared to the other essay?*

Answer: For essay paper the content comes from the GS books and materials. I followed a very simple strategy for my essay preparation. I wrote around 10 essays after preliminary examination and compared those with toppers essays. Philosophical essays requires a little more brainstorming compared to the essays of other nature but the best part is that, generally these essays are more rewarding. One can use a lot of creativity in those essays that will make the essay look more attractive than the rest.

11. *Students usually complain about the vastness of the syllabus of GSII i.e., Polity, Governance and International Relation. What was your strategy for GSII?*

Answer: For GS II my primary focus was on completing the syllabus on time. I read each and every topic in the syllabus and made some short notes. Since the paper is dynamic in nature, I religiously followed current affairs and included its content in my answers. For international relations I followed the Newspaper articles especially *The Indian Express* to diversify my knowledge.

12. *How did you manage your time in the Mains examination? Were you able to answer all the questions? Did you underline the keywords in your answers? Did you use diagrams and flowcharts in your answers?*

Answer: Time management comes from practicing answers and mock tests. I appeared for timed mock tests.



While writing answers it's important that you convey your thoughts to someone completely unknown to you via your answer. So underlining keywords can be of great help if you want to draw their attention to particular fact/event. Diagrams and flowcharts are important because they make the process of understanding smooth without making it cumbersome. These small details catch more attention compared to filling the pages just with words. So a big yes to keyword underlining, flowcharts and diagrams.

13. *What is that one thing which you think made your answers stand out in the crowd?*

Answer: The sense of rationality in my answers and less bookish approach while writing the answers might have made my answers to stand out in the crowd. Once you understand the demand of the question 50% work is already done. I believe majority of the aspirants falters there while writing answers

14. *How did you prepare for the Personality Test? Did any of your past experiences of life help answer the questions asked in the interview? Any interesting question you would like to share that was asked to you by the board?*

Answer: I mostly looked for previous year mock interviews those were available and brush up my current affairs knowledge. As a student, I have given a lot of presentation and Q&A sessions. So it was not a new task but of course, I was little nervous initially.

In my interview I was asked about my favourite movie and why it was my favourite. That was something I didn't expect. However I love movies and the answer was right there in my head. Also, as I have done my Masters from Hyderabad there was a question regarding the creation of Telangana and the reason behind it. To sum up, I can say the Personality Test is not only about bookish knowledge and being confident can actually change the game.

15. *How satisfied are you after having joined the service? How similar or different is it from what you had imagined?*

Answer: Well, I would like to be a little diplomatic here. It's hasn't been long since I have joined. So I'm still learning. While everything comes with its pros and cons, I'm overall happy with the service. It's somewhat similar to what I imagined it would be, may be with some scope of improvement.

16. *What is your opinion regarding the usefulness of online learning platforms of Assam such as eKuhipath in the preparation journey of the aspirants?*

Answer: Platforms such as eKuhipath are a very useful for the students as they act as guide and mentors to thousands of those students who cannot go for off-line coaching due to their



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exorbitant prices. They have been able to provide high quality materials at minimum prices. Thus platforms like eKuhipath are indeed a positive addition to the list of online learning platform.

Team eKuhipath is thankful to Mr. Pathak for the time out of his busy schedule. We wish him all success in the service and in achieving milestones in the journey he has embarked upon.



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CONTENTS

POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. PUNCHHI COMMISSION REPORT	4
2. THE POWERS OF GOVERNORS REGARDING ASSEMBLY SESSIONS.....	6
3. LEGISLATOR FACING DISQUALIFICATION CAN'T ATTEND FLOOR TEST: SUPREME COURT.....	7
4. WHIP IN A STATE ASSEMBLY OR PARLIAMENT?.....	7
5. Supreme court on appointment of the CEC and EC	9
6. ICC: ARREST WARRANT FOR VLADIMIR PUTIN	11
7. SHAHEED DIWAS	12
8. DEFAMATION	13
9. SECOND SUMMIT FOR DEMOCRACY	15
10. SAME SEX MARRIAGE	16
11. THE SMART CITIES MISSION: WITH DEADLINE LOOMING, A STATUS CHECK	18

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

12. INDIA HOSTS FIRST MEETING OF GOVERNING BOARD OF BIMSTEC ENERGY CENTRE (BEC).....	20
13. UNDERSTANDING THE WINDSOR FRAMEWORK.....	21
14. INDIAN DIASPORA: THE ROOTS OF GLOBAL SUCCESS.....	23
15. QUAD WORKING GROUP ON COUNTER-TERRORISM	25
16. AUSTRALIA-INDIA EDUCATION QUALIFICATION RECOGNITION MECHANISM	28
17. SRI LANKA'S RECOVERY THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIA'S SUPPORT	31
18. US SENATE RESOLUTION FOR UNDERLINING BACKING INDIA ON MCMAHON LINE	34
19. INDO-PACIFIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK (IPEF).....	36
20. INDIA AND THE KOREAN WAR	37

GEOGRAPHY

21. WESTERLIES GOVERNED THE CLIMATIC VARIATIONS AND LANDSCAPE OF TRANS-HIMALAYAS HISTORICALLY: STUDY.....	40
22. CORAL REEFS DAMAGED.....	42
23. FREDDY CYCLONE	44
24. THE GOVERNMENT EMPHASIZES A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO DISASTER MANAGEMENT	45
25. THE GREAT RIFT: AFRICA'S SPLITTING PLATES COULD GIVE BIRTH TO A NEW OCEAN, BUT WITH CONSEQUENCES	47



26. HOW INDIA'S SUGAR SHIPMENTS TO THE WORLD ARE SURGING.....	49
27. SOUTH ATLANTIC ANOMALY.....	52
28. WITHOUT ACTION PLANS, INDIA'S POOREST WILL CONTINUE TO BEAR BRUNT OF HEATWAVES: STUDY.....	53

HISTORY AND ART & CULTURE

29.AURANGABAD TO SAMBHAJI NAGAR – HISTORY OF THE PLACE.....	56
30.ATTUKAL PONGALA.....	57
31.DIFFERENT FACES OF THE INDIAN WOMEN'S MOVEMENT	58
32.WOMEN AND NATION BUILDING: 1857 TO THE REPUBLIC	59
33.THE ELEPHANT WHISPERERS	63
34.BUMCHU FESTIVAL	64
35.NAVROZ FESTIVAL	65

ECONOMICS

36.K-SHAPED' ECONOMIC RECOVERY	67
37.THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RISE IN INDIA'S PETROLEUM PRODUCT EXPORTS TO THE EU	68
38.TOO-BIG-TO-FAIL BANKS/ D-SIBs	70
39. TRADE IN RUPEE	72

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

40.ADENOVIRUS	74
41. INDIA'S FIRST DNA VACCINE FOR DENGUE	75
42. NISAR SATELLITE.....	76
43. H3N2 OUTBREAK.....	77
44. INDIA, U.S. TO LAUNCH A SEMICONDUCTOR SUB-COMMITTEE.....	78
45. "REDDMATTER": NEW SUPERCONDUCTOR MATERIAL.....	79
46.ANTIBIOTIC DRUGS ON LIVESTOCK.....	80

ENVIRONMENT

47.CULTURAL BURNS	81
48.PHYTOPLANKTON BLOOMS	82
49. JERDON'S NARROW-MOUTHED FROG (UPERODON MONTANUS).....	83
50. INTERNATIONAL BIG CAT ALLIANCE (IBCA).....	84
51. FOREST FIRES IN INDIA	85
52.EURASIAN OTTERS	86
53.LONG-TAILED AND SMEW DUCKS	87
54. CONSERVATION PLAN FOR GREAT INDIAN BUSTARDS.....	88



NORTH-EAST

55. NAGALAND GETS ITS FIRST WOMEN MLA's	90
57. SILSAKO TO BE THE LARGEST LAKE IN GUWAHATI: CM HIMANTA BISWA SARMA	92
58. BIHU: WORLD RECORD.....	93
59. GI TAG FOR GAMOSA	94
60. JADEV PAYENG SUGGESTED GLOBAL LOCKDOWN.....	97
61. CIVILIAN AWARDS OF ASSAM.....	95
.....	95
EKUHIPATH SHORTS	97
SAMPLE MAINS ANSWER.....	100



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SL	Date	Time	Paper	Answer Synopsis Upload on Website	Last date for Submission of Answer
1	25-04-2023	9:00 AM	GS I	26-04-2023	27-04-2023
2	28-04-2023	2:00 PM	GS II	29-04-2023	30-04-2023
3	02-05-2023	9:00 AM	GS III	03-05-2023	05-05-2023
4	06-05-2023	2:00 PM	GS IV	07-05-2023	08-05-2023
5	10-05-2023	9:00 AM	GS V	11-05-2023	12-05-2023
6	14-05-2023	9:00 AM	Essay	18-05-2023	16-05-2023
7	18-05-2023	9:00 AM	GS I	19-05-2023	20-05-2023
8	21-05-2023	2:00 PM	GS II	22-05-2023	23-05-2023
9	24-05-2023	9:00 AM	GS III	25-05-2023	26-05-2023
10	28-05-2023	2:00 PM	GS IV	29-05-2023	30-05-2023
11	01-06-2023	9:00 AM	GS V	02-06-2023	03-06-2023



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POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

1. PUNCHHI COMMISSION REPORT



WHY IN NEWS?



News: The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has decided to start the process of seeking the states' comments on the **Punchhi Commission's report** on Centre-state relations.

What is Punchhi Commission Report?

- ❖ The Punchhi Commission was constituted in **2007** under the chairmanship of former Chief **Justice of India Madan Mohan Punchhi**.
- ❖ In 2010, the Commission submitted its report to the Centre in **seven volumes**.
- ❖ Deliberation on the report was carried out by **Inter-State Council (ISC's) Standing Committee** in 2017 and 2018.
- ❖ However, **the report is yet to be implemented** and the government has said that it will seek the state's view on the report again.
- ❖ **The objective of the commission:** To examine and review the operation of the current agreements between the Union and States.

Major recommendations of the Commission:

- ❖ **National Integration Council:** It recommended the **creation of a superseding structure for matters relating to internal security** (like the Homeland Security Department in the United States). This structure could be known as the '**National Integration Council**'.



- ❖ **Amendment to Article 355 and Article 356:** It advised that Article 355 and Article 356 of the Constitution should be amended. The recommendation seeks to protect **States' interest by curbing the centre's misuse of powers.**
- ❖ **Subjects in the Concurrent List:** The Commission recommended that the States should be consulted through the inter-state council before **bills are introduced on matters that fall in the concurrent list.** A concurrent list is one of the three lists; in this, the matters on which both State and Centre governments **can formulate laws are mentioned.**

Appointment and Removal of Governors:

- ❖ The Governor should stay away from active politics (even at a local level) for at least two years prior to his appointment.
- ❖ There should be a say of the state's Chief minister **while making the Governor's appointment.**
- ❖ **A committee should be formed** that is entrusted with the task of appointment of governors. This committee may comprise the **Prime Minister, the Home Minister, the Lok Sabha's speaker** and the concerned **Chief Minister of the State.**
- ❖ The term of appointment should be five years.
- ❖ Governor could only be **removed via a resolution by the State Legislature.**
- ❖ **Union's Power of Making Treaties:**
- ❖ The treaty-making power of the union **should be regulated with respect to treaties formulated** in concern with the matters present in the State list.
- ❖ This way, the states will get more representation in their internal affairs.
- ❖ The Commission identified that the states need to be more involved in such kinds of treaties that are formulated in reference to their issues. This will ensure a peaceful co-existence between the different levels of the government.

Appointment of Chief Ministers:

- ❖ Clear guidelines should be made with regard to the appointment of chief ministers so that the **governor's discretionary powers are limited** in this aspect.
- ❖ A pre-poll alliance is to be considered **as a single political party.**
- ❖ The order of precedence while the State government is being formed should be the following:
 - ❖ The group/alliance with the largest pre-poll alliance with the highest number.
 - ❖ The single largest party with support from others.
 - ❖ The post-poll alliance with a few parties joining the government.
 - ❖ The post-poll alliance with a few parties joining the government and remaining including independents giving outside support.



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2.THE POWERS OF GOVERNORS REGARDING ASSEMBLY SESSIONS

Source: Indian Express

News: The Solicitor General told the SC that the Punjab Governor had summoned the state Assembly for a budget session. This came minutes before the SC was set to hear a challenge by the Punjab government against the Governor, **over his refusal to summon the Budget session** of Vidhan Sabha.

Few Constitutional provision of Governor

- ❖ The Governor had referenced Article 167 of the Constitution, which deals with the responsibilities of the Chief Minister in providing information to the Governor.
- ❖ **Article 163(1)** of the Indian Constitution says that there shall be a council of Ministers with the Chief Minister at the head **to aid and advise the Governor in the exercise of his functions.**
 - ❖ However, **except** in cases where s/he is required under this constitution to exercise his/her **discretion.**

Constitutional Provisions Related to Governor's Role in Calling an Assembly Session:

- ❖ **Under Article 174**, a Governor shall summon the House at a time and place, as s/he thinks fit.
 - ❖ **Article 174 (2) (a)** says a Governor may from “time to time” prorogue the House and **174 (2) (b)** allows her or him to dissolve the Legislative Assembly.
- ❖ A joint reading of the two provisions leaves the Governor with **minimal discretion** in summoning the house. **For example**, when the CM has lost the support of the House and his strength is debatable.
- ❖ In 2016, the SC (in Nabam Rebia case) held that **the power to summon the House is not solely vested in the Governor.**



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3. LEGISLATOR FACING DISQUALIFICATION CAN'T ATTEND FLOOR TEST: SUPREME COURT

Source: The Hindu

News: According to the Chief Justice of India – allowing an MP or an MLA who is facing disqualification under the anti-defection law to participate in a floor test caused by his own doings will defeat the very purpose of the Tenth Schedule.



About Anti-Defection Law:

- ❖ Introduced through the **52nd Amendment Act of 1985** – inserted in the **Tenth Schedule of the Indian Constitution**.
- ❖ It lays down the process of **disqualification on grounds of defection**.
- ❖ The **presiding officer has the authority** to disqualify a member on proven grounds of defection.
- ❖ To **prevent the legislators from changing their political affiliations during their tenure in office**

4. WHIP IN A STATE ASSEMBLY OR PARLIAMENT?

Source: Indian Express

News : A five-judge Bench led by the Chief Justice of India is hearing petitions filed in the wake of last year's political crisis in Maharashtra – raising the importance of whip.



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What is a 'whip' in the House?



- ❖ In parliamentary parlance, a whip may refer to **both a written order to members of a party in the House to abide by a certain direction and to a designated official of the party who is authorized to issue such a direction.**
- ❖ The term is derived from the **old British practice of “whipping in” lawmakers to follow the party line.**

How serious are whips issued by parties?

The importance of a whip can be inferred from the **number of times an order is underlined.**

- ❖ A **one-line whip** underlined once, is usually issued to **inform party members of a vote, and allows them to abstain in case they decide not to follow the party line.**
- ❖ A **two-line whip** directs them to be present during the vote.
- ❖ A **three-line whip** is the strongest, employed on important occasions such as the second reading of a Bill or a no-confidence motion, and places an obligation on members to toe the party line.



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What can happen if a whip is defied?

- ❖ **United Kingdom** – an MP can lose membership of the party for defying the whip, but can keep her/ his House seat as an Independent.
- ❖ **US** – the party whip's role is to gauge how **many legislators are in support of a Bill and how many** are opposed to it — and the extent possible, persuade them to vote according to the party line on the issue.
- ❖ **India** – rebelling against a **three-line whip can put a lawmaker's membership in the House at risk**. The **anti-defection law allows the Speaker/ Chairperson to disqualify such a member**; the only exception is when there is merger of the party.

5. Supreme court on appointment of the CEC and EC

Source: Indian Express

News : A five-judge Constitution Bench of the SC **unanimously ruled that a high-power committee** consisting of the **PM, the Leader of Opposition in LS and the CJI** must pick the CEC and ECs.

How are the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and Election Commissioners (ECs) currently appointed?

Articles related to Elections	
324	Superintendence, direction and control of elections to be vested in an Election Commission.
325	No person to be ineligible for inclusion in, or to claim to be included in a special, electoral roll on grounds of religion, race, caste or sex.
326	Elections to the House of the People and to the Legislative Assemblies of States to be on the basis of adult suffrage.
327	Power of Parliament to make provision with respect to elections to Legislatures.
328	Power of Legislature of a State to make provision with respect to elections to such Legislature.
329	Bar to interference by courts in electoral matters.

The Election Commission (Conditions of Service of ECs and Transaction of Business) Act 1991:

- ❖ An amendment to the above act (in 1993) made the CEC and the ECs equal by giving all three the **status of an SC judge**, retiring at the age of **65 years/after 6 years** (whichever is earlier).
- ❖ This means, all three Commissioners now had **equal decision-making powers**, as both would act unanimously and **in case of difference of opinion, the majority view** would prevail.

Powers of the Election Commission: as envisaged in the Constitution, by the Supreme Court of India & the Parliament

- ❖ **Babasaheb Ambedkar:** The whole election machinery should be in the hands of a Central Election Commission.
- ❖ He further acknowledges that **there is nothing in the Constitution to prevent the nomination of an ineligible person** to the position of CEC or another EC.
- ❖ **Parliament subsequently enacted the RPA 1950 and 1951:** To define and enlarge the powers of the Commission.
- ❖ **The SC (in 1977):** The words ‘**superintendence, direction and control**’ as well as ‘**conduct of all elections**’ are the **broadest terms**, not defined by the Constitution.

Reputation of the ECI & the need for reforms

- ❖ The Commission has earned **public trust** by working as an **independent and neutral authority**.
- ❖ This achievement has been made possible as the Commission enjoyed **autonomy and its functioning insulated** from the interference of the executive and judiciary.
- ❖ However, there were growing concerns on that front. **For example**, the top court noted that the **appointment of Arun Goel as EC had been carried out with “lightning speed”**.

Recommendations to reform the system:

- ❖ Ambedkar noted that the provisions in the **American Constitution:** check (through the Senate) upon the extravagance of the President in making such appointments.
- ❖ **The 2nd ARC** in 2007 recommended that a collegium headed by the PM be formed to make recommendations to the President regarding appointments of the CEC and ECs.

SC’s observations during its recent verdict:

- ❖ The judgment has brought the appointment process on par with that of the CBI Director.
- ❖ A CEC (like SC judges) can be removed from office only by way of a parliamentary process. However, **no such protection of tenure is available** to the ECs (removed by the President if CEC recommends).

- ❖ A person weak-kneed before the powerful (executive) cannot be appointed as an EC.
- ❖ Fierce independence, **neutrality and honesty** envisaged in the institution require an **end to government monopoly** and “**exclusive control**” over appointments.

Conclusion:

- ❖ The judgment recognises the fine distinction between **conventional democracy (majority alone matters)** and **constitutional democracy (Constitution matters)**.
- ❖ The judgment revives the era of judicial activism, ensuring a **more independent Election Commission**.

6. ICC: ARREST WARRANT FOR VLADIMIR PUTIN

Source: Indian Express

Context: The **International Criminal Court** issued an **arrest warrant for war crimes for President Vladimir Putin and a second Russian official**.



Why did the International Criminal Court issued the warrants?

- ❖ The court says **Putin bears individual criminal responsibility for the abduction and deportation of Ukrainian children** since Russia's full-scale invasion.
- ❖ The court also issued a **warrant for Maria Lvova-Belova**, Russia's commissioner for children's rights, who has been the public face of a Kremlin-

sponsored program in which Ukrainian children and teenagers have been taken to Russia.

About International Criminal Court:

- ❖ The International Criminal Court was created as a standing body to **investigate war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity under a 1998 treaty** known as **the Rome Statute**.
- ❖ Previously, the United Nations Security Council had **established an ad hoc tribunals to address atrocities in places such as the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda**.
- ❖ Based in *The Hague, a Dutch city* that has long been a centre for **international law and justice**.

What does the warrant mean for Putin?

- ❖ The court **cannot try defendants in absentia** and **Russia has said it will not surrender its own officials**.
- ❖ Russia's Foreign Ministry quickly **dismissed the warrants, noting that it is not a party to the court**.
- ❖ Still, the warrant for **Putin's arrest deepens his isolation in the West** and could limit his movements overseas.
- ❖ If he **travels to a state that is a party to the ICC**, that country must arrest him, according to its **obligations under international law**. It is important to note that countries such as China, India, Russia, and the US are not the member of ICC.

7. SHAHEED DIWAS

Source: Indian Express

Shaheed Diwas is observed on **23rd March every year** to pay tribute to the sacrifice of **Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev, and Rajguru** who were executed by the British government in **1931** for mistakenly **assassinating a British police officer, John Saunders** (although their target was British police superintendent, **James Scott**—who was involved in the death of Lala Lajpat Rai)



- ❖ The day is also known as **Sarvodaya Day or Martyrs' Day**.
- ❖ It is different from the **Martyrs' Day observed on 30th January**, which commemorates the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi.

8. DEFAMATION

Source: The Hindu, Indian Express

News: Rahul Gandhi's disqualification comes a day after he was sentenced to two years in jail in a defamation case, triggering the process of his disqualification as an MP.



Definition: It is an **injury to the reputation of a person** resulting from a statement that is false. Anyone who feels he or she has been wrongly accused of something by someone in public, through words or gestures, spoken, written, or by inference can file a defamation suit in a court of law claiming that the accusation levelled deals a blow to his/her reputation.

Defamation essentially must fulfil the following requirements:

- ❖ **The statement must be published** (both oral and written forms publication)
- ❖ **The statement must lower the estimation of the person** (damaging to the reputation of the person against whom charges have been made)

Defamation in the Constitution: Article 19(2) has imposed reasonable exemption to freedom of speech and expression granted under Article 19(1)(a). **Defamation** is one of the exceptions.



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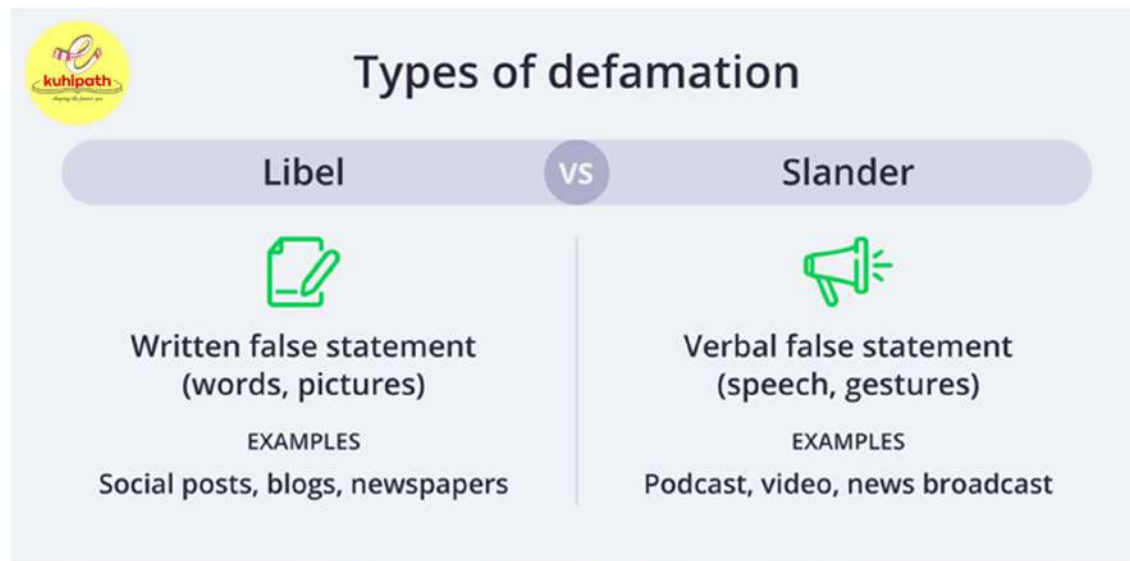
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Types of Defamation :



There are **two types of defamation** in India: **Civil and Criminal**.

- ❖ **Civil defamation:** Under this, a person who is defamed can move either High Court or subordinate courts and seek damages in the form of monetary compensation. There is no punishment in the form of a jail sentence.
- ❖ **Criminal Defamation:** Under this, the person against whom a defamation case is filed might be sentenced to two years' imprisonment or fined or both.

Section 500 of the IPC: IPC Section 499 lays down the definition of defamation and **Section 500** lays down the punishment for criminal defamation (two years' imprisonment for a person found guilty of defamation).

Disqualification of MPs and MLAs

1. **Articles 102(1) and 191(1):** For holding an office of profit, being of unsound mind or insolvent, or not having valid citizenship
2. **10th Schedule:** Disqualification of the members on grounds of **defection**
3. **RPA 1951** provides for disqualification for conviction in criminal cases.

Disqualification in RPA, 1951

- ❖ **Section 8(3)** of the RPA mandates that an MP can be disqualified if convicted and sentenced to **not less than two years** of imprisonment (from the date of such conviction and shall continue to be disqualified for a further period of six years since his release)—i.e., **Immediate Effect** (unless the conviction is stayed by a higher court) (SC in **Lily Thomas vs. Union of India** case and **Lok Prahari vs. Union of India**(2018))

9. SECOND SUMMIT FOR DEMOCRACY

Source: The Hindu

News: President Biden co-hosted the second Summit for Democracy with the governments of Costa Rica, the Netherlands, Korea, and Zambia. India was also an invitee to the summit. PM Modi virtually addressed the Summit. Mexico gave it a miss.



Highlights of the PM Speech

Long before the rest of the world, the concept of elected leaders was widespread in ancient India. Broad-based advisory councils wield political power, according to the ancient Vedas. In historical accounts, the Republic states of ancient India, where rulers were not hereditary, are also frequently mentioned. India is, without a doubt, the mother of democracy.

Objectives of the summit

- ❖ Defending human rights, supporting human rights advocates, and independent media.
- ❖ To discuss digital surveillance, and how it posed a threat to democracy in the digital era.
- ❖ Strengthening democratic institutions and measures to prevent authoritarianism.

2nd Summit for Democracy

- ❖ A total of 120 world leaders have been invited to take part.
- ❖ The second Summit was co-hosted by the United States, Costa Rica, Zambia, the Netherlands, and South Korea in March 2023.
- ❖ The summit was held in a virtual format and hybrid gatherings, with representatives from the government, civil society and the private sector participate.

- ❖ The **US president committed to investing \$690 million to support democratic initiatives across the world**. The funds will be used to assist initiatives that promote free and independent media, fight corruption, uphold human rights, enhance democratic-improving technology, and promote free and fair elections.

10. SAME SEX MARRIAGE

Source : The Hindu

News: The Centre has opposed **same-sex marriage in the Supreme Court**, stating that **marriage between a biological man and woman is a holy union**, a sacrament, and a sanskar in India. A Bench led by the Chief Justice of India refers petitions for legal recognition of same-sex marriages to a Constitution Bench of five Supreme Court judges.



Centre's argument against the same-sex marriage

- ❖ Marriage in India can be recognised only when there is a marriage between a "biological man" and a "biological woman" capable of bearing a child, according to Parliament's definition of marriage.
- ❖ The government argued that the Court had **only decriminalised sexual intercourse between same-sex persons** in its 2018 judgement in **Navtej Singh Johar v. Union of India**, and not legitimised this "conduct".

- ❖ The court, **while decriminalising homosexuality**, did not accept same-sex marriage as part of the **fundamental right to life and dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution**.
- ❖ The power of amendment in the Special Marriage Act-1954 or Hindu Marriage Act-1955 is vested in the legislature and not in the judiciary. As a result, the legislature can consider the status of recognising this type of marriage while balancing social morality and individual independence.

Arguments in Favour of Same Sex Marriage

Equal Rights and Protection Under the Law: All individuals, regardless of their sexual orientation, have the right to marry and form a family. Same-sex couples should have the **same legal rights** and protections as opposite-sex couples.

Strengthening Families and Communities: Marriage provides social and economic benefits to couples and their families. Allowing same-sex couples to marry **strengthens families and communities by promoting stability and security**.

Global Acceptance: Same-sex marriage is legal in many countries around the world, and denying this right to individuals in a democratic society goes **against the global principles**. In 133 countries homosexuality decriminalised, but only in **32 of them same-sex marriage is legal**.

Countries legalised same sex marriage:



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11. THE SMART CITIES MISSION: WITH DEADLINE LOOMING, A STATUS CHECK

Source: Indian Express

News: As the **June 2023 deadline** for completing the Smart Cities Mission approaches, the government has asked 20 of the worst-performing cities — ones that have completed the fewest projects under the mission — to buck up.



What is the Smart Cities Mission?

- ❖ The Smart Cities Mission is an initiative of the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry that was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on June 25, 2015. Cities across the country were asked to submit proposals for projects to improve municipal services and to make their jurisdictions more liveable.
- ❖ Between January 2016 and June 2018 (when the last city, **Shillong**, was chosen), the Ministry selected 100 cities for the Mission over five rounds.

- ❖ The projects were supposed to be completed within five years of the selection of the city, but in 2021 the Ministry changed the deadline for all cities to June 2023, which was earlier the deadline for Shillong alone.

What kinds of projects were proposed

- ❖ After the Ministry gave broad guidelines to the participating cities, the project proposals ranged from making certain stretches of roads more accessible and pedestrian-friendly to more capital-intensive ones like laying water pipelines and constructing sewage treatment plants.
- ❖ All 100 cities have also constructed Integrated Command and Control Centres to monitor all security, emergency and civic services. During the peak of the Covid-19 pandemic, these centres were converted into emergency response units by many of the cities.

What is the status of the projects

- ❖ As of March 3, the 100 cities have issued work orders for 7,799 projects worth Rs 1.80 lakh crore, the government told Parliament on March 13. Out of these, 5,399 projects worth Rs.1.02 lakh crore have been completed, and the rest are ongoing.
- ❖ Only around 20 cities are likely to meet the June deadline; the rest will need more time. Cities selected in January and June 2018 have achieved 44% of their targets, while those selected in 2016 in the second round are not much farther ahead with 46% completion.
- ❖ Shillong has completed just one of its 18 proposed projects.

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4	06-05-2023	2:00 PM	GS IV	07-05-2023	08-05-2023
5	10-05-2023	9:00 AM	GS V	11-05-2023	12-05-2023
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7	18-05-2023	9:00 AM	GS I	19-05-2023	20-05-2023
8	21-05-2023	2:00 PM	GS II	22-05-2023	23-05-2023
9	24-05-2023	9:00 AM	GS III	25-05-2023	26-05-2023
10	28-05-2023	2:00 PM	GS IV	29-05-2023	30-05-2023
11	01-06-2023	9:00 AM	GS V	02-06-2023	03-06-2023

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

12. INDIA HOSTS FIRST MEETING OF GOVERNING BOARD OF BIMSTEC ENERGY CENTRE (BEC)


Source: [PIB](#)


News: India hosted the first meeting of the Governing Board of BIMSTEC Energy Centre (BEC) on 27th February, 2023 at Shangi-La Hotel, Bengaluru. Shri Ajay Tewari, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Power, and chairperson of the Governing Board of the BEC, welcomed the delegates from BIMSTEC member countries and gave a brief background about ongoing cooperation among BIMSTEC countries.





BIMSTEC


The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation



Nepal



Bhutan


Bangladesh



India


Thailand


Myanmar







Sri Lanka

7 MEMBER COUNTRIES



Founded in 1997 through **Bangkok Declaration**

Objectives of BIMSTEC

-  To enable environment for rapid economic development.
-  To collaborate and mutually assist members on matters of common interest.
-  To maintain close and beneficial cooperation with existing international and regional organizations.
-  To endeavour to eradicate poverty from the Bay of Bengal region.
-  To establish multidimensional connectivity, promote synergy among connectivity frameworks in the region.

- ❖ India's "Neighbourhood first" and "Act East" Policies were highlighted.
- ❖ India will establish the **BIMSTEC Energy Centre (BEC)** at the premises of Central Power Research Institute (CPRI), Bengaluru.

13.UNDERSTANDING THE WINDSOR FRAMEWORK

Source: Indian express

News: Recently, the UK government reached a landmark deal with the European Union (EU) on post-Brexit trade rules that will govern Northern Ireland. The Northern Ireland Protocol, which was one of the trickiest consequences of Brexit and caused issues on both the political and economic fronts, will be replaced with the "Windsor Framework."

What is The Northern Ireland Protocol?

- ❖ A trade pact between the U.K. and the E.U. was negotiated in 2020 and is known as the Northern Ireland Protocol.
- ❖ Under the protocol, both the U.K. and E.U. agreed that the inspection of goods would be conducted between Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
- ❖ Trade and customs checks of products coming from Great Britain were conducted at its ports along the Irish Sea while Northern Ireland was still a part of the EU single market.



Concerns with the Northern Ireland Protocol

- ❖ The protocol has led to political division in Northern Ireland.
- ❖ The checks made trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland cumbersome, with food products, especially, losing out on shelf life while they waited for clearance. Some taxation and spending policies of the UK government could not be implemented in Northern Ireland because of EU rules.
- ❖ The sale of medicines, too, was caught between different British and EU rules.

Salient features of the Windsor Framework:

- ❖ The framework has two crucial aspects:
- ❖ **Introduction of a green lane and red lane system** – For goods that will stay in Northern Ireland and those that will go to the EU respectively.



- ❖ **The Stormont Brake** – it allows Northern Ireland lawmakers and London to veto any EU regulation they believe affects the region adversely.
- ❖ **The two-lane system**– British goods meant for Northern Ireland will use the green lane at the ports and will be allowed to pass with minimal paperwork and checks.
- ❖ Physical checks will be conducted if the goods are deemed suspicious, in place of the routine checks now.
- ❖ Goods destined for Ireland or the rest of the EU will have to take the red lane, with the attendant customs and other checks.



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14. INDIAN DIASPORA: THE ROOTS OF GLOBAL SUCCESS

Source: Business Standard

News: The astonishing presence of Indians in the top positions of international institutions, like IBM, Google, Microsoft, and the World Bank, has come to light during a period when it is challenging for immigrants to succeed.



Few Remarkable Contribution of Indian in various field world wide-

Technology: Played a crucial role in the development of Silicon Valley.

Sundar Pichai, CEO of Google, Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft.

Medicine: Dr Sanjay Gupta, CNN's Chief Medical Correspondent, Dr Siddhartha Mukherjee, Pulitzer Prize-winning author.

Entrepreneurship: Vinod Khosla, co-founder of Sun Microsystems, Shantanu Narayen, CEO of Adobe, Indra Nooyi, former CEO of PepsiCo.



Literature: Salman Rushdie, Booker Prize-winning author, Jhumpa Lahiri, Pulitzer Prize-winning author, Amitav Ghosh, literary critic and novelist.

Politics: Rishi Sunak (UK Prime Minister), Kamala Harris, Vice President of the United States, Nikki Haley, former Governor of South Carolina, Ami Bera, Congressman from California.

Reasons behind Indians achieving top leadership positions

- ❖ **Education:** Indians place a strong emphasis on education, and many Indian leaders have received top-notch education from prestigious institutions around the world.
- ❖ **Diversity:** This diversity has helped Indian leaders develop a **broad perspective and a deep understanding of global issues.**
- ❖ **Work Ethic**
- ❖ **Networking:** Both within and outside of India, Indians have a robust network.
- ❖ **Multilingual:** Many Indians are **multilingual**, which has helped them communicate effectively with people from different countries and cultures.

Implications of its people having top leadership positions in global organizations for India:

- ❖ Increased Global Influence
- ❖ **Reduce asymmetric information** and thus improve global engagement with India.
- ❖ Improved Reputation
- ❖ Economic Benefits
- ❖ Access to Information
- ❖ Capacity Building
- ❖ National Pride

Previous year Question:

Indian Diaspora has an important role to play in South East Asian countries' economies and societies. Appraise the role of the Indian Diaspora in South-East Asia in this context. (UPSC 2017)



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15. QUAD WORKING GROUP ON COUNTER-TERRORISM

Source: The Hindu

News: The Foreign Ministers of Quad countries on March 3, 2023 reaffirmed the grouping's commitment for a free and open Indo-Pacific and said it strongly supports the rule of law, sovereignty, territorial integrity and peaceful settlement of disputes, in comments seen as an oblique message to China.



Important Points From The Quad Statement

- ❖ The committee would look into ways to combat newly discovered and developing types of terrorism, radicalization, and violent extremism.
- ❖ In addition to advocating for long-lasting peace in Ukraine, the group also emphasised respect for territorial integrity and sovereignty while making a passing allusion to Russia's invasion of the country.
- ❖ The Quad group, which had previously focused mostly on China's aggressive behaviour in the Indo-Pacific, has now expanded its focus to include Russia as a result of the first mention of the Ukrainian War in a joint statement.



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QUAD group:



- ❖ It is the grouping of four **democracies –India, Australia, the US, and Japan.**
- ❖ All four nations find a common ground of being democratic nations and also support the common interest of unhindered maritime trade and security.
- ❖ It aims to ensure and support a **“free, open and prosperous” Indo-Pacific region.**
- ❖ The idea of Quad was first mooted by Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2007. However, the idea couldn’t move ahead with Australia pulling out of it, apparently due to Chinese pressure.
- ❖ Finally in 2017, India, Australia, the US and Japan, came together and formed this “quadrilateral” coalition.

QUAD members strive to preserve the independence and accessibility of the Indo-Pacific area:

1. **Enhancing Maritime Security:** QUAD members aim to improve maritime security through joint patrols, capacity building, and surveillance operations in the Indo-Pacific region. In 2020, the QUAD held its first joint naval exercises in the Indian Ocean. This would ensure independence remains for countries in Indo-Pacific.
2. **Promoting Free and Open Trade:** QUAD members support free and open trade to ensure economic growth and stability in the region. In 2020, India and Japan agreed to launch a Supply Chain Resilience Initiative to ensure a stable supply of goods and services.
3. **Strengthening Bilateral and Multilateral Ties:** QUAD members seek to strengthen bilateral and multilateral ties with regional countries to promote peace, stability, and prosperity. In 2021, India hosted the QUAD summit, where the leaders discussed ways to deepen cooperation with ASEAN countries.



4. **Supporting Infrastructure Development:** QUAD members promote quality infrastructure development in the Indo-Pacific region to enhance connectivity, trade, and economic growth to ensure accessibility to the benefits of financial cooperation.
5. **Freedom of Navigation:** Members of QUAD want to make sure that ships and planes can move freely in the Indo-Pacific region for continued access to the sea for multiple purposes.
6. **Countering Terrorism:** QUAD members support counter-terrorism efforts to maintain regional security and stability ensuring both independence and accessibility. Recently, a Quad Working Group on Counter-Terrorism has been announced to counter new and emerging forms of terrorism, radicalization, and violent extremism.
7. **Promoting Contacts between People:** Members of QUAD encourage contacts between people to strengthen cultural ties and mutual understanding for cooperation to ensure partnership in Indo-Pacific.

Worries that threaten QUAD's goals:

1. **Divergent Interests:** The four-member countries have different strategic interests that may not always align. For example, India's perception of the Indo-Pacific differs from that of the USA.
2. **Economic Dependence on China:** Many countries in the region are economically dependent on China, which makes it challenging to balance the financial and strategic aspects. Australia's decision to join the QUAD drew criticism from China, which led to economic retaliation against Australian goods.
3. **China's Influence in the Region:** China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific threatens the Quad's goals.
4. **Regional Tensions:** Ongoing tensions in the region, such as the North Korean nuclear threat, territorial disputes in the South China Sea, and India-Pakistan tensions, can divert attention from the QUAD's objectives. In 2020, India and China engaged in a violent border clash, further heightened regional tensions.
5. **Political Instability:** Political instability in some of the QUAD countries can hinder progress and the implementation of the group's policies.
6. **Diplomatic Challenges:** Diplomatic challenges may arise due to differences in cultural and political values and diplomatic relations with non-QUAD countries.
7. **Public Perception:** The Quad faces criticism from countries like China, which view the group as a threat to their interests. Example: In 2018, China's foreign minister warned against the formation of the QUAD, citing concerns about a potential "Asian NATO."

Despite concerns, the quad has huge potential as a group due to several reasons. It can help preserve peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. It may also promote democratic ideals in addition to promoting democratic principles, ensuring a rules-based system, and countering China's aggressiveness. It can also help economies grow, improve connections, and make it easier for member countries to work together on technical issues.

16. AUSTRALIA-INDIA EDUCATION QUALIFICATION RECOGNITION MECHANISM

Source: Indian Express

News: The Australian Prime Minister, Anthony Albanese, announced an “Australia-India education qualification recognition mechanism” during a visit to India.



About the Australia-India education qualification recognition mechanism

- ❖ This new mechanism means that **degrees obtained in Australia (including online degrees) will now be recognised in India**, and similarly, Indian degrees will be recognized by Australian colleges and authorities.
- ❖ **Significance:** The agreement is expected to **make it easier for Indians to go to Australia** for both education and work, and vice-versa.
- ❖ **Exceptions:** Professional registrations of engineering, medicine and law graduates will remain outside the ambit of this agreement.

Other Announcements:

- ❖ **Foreign university in India-**
Geelong's Deakin University will be the first overseas university to open its branch campus in India (at GIFT City, Gandhi Nagar)
- ❖ **'Maitri' scholarship-**
Maitri scholarship was announced for Indian students studying in Australia. It will provide financial assistance to Indian students in Australia for four years.

India Australia relation so far

- ❖ 1941: Australia and India for the first time established diplomatic relations in the pre-Independence period, when the **Consulate General of India was first opened as a Trade Office in Sydney in 1941.**
- ❖ 1998: India-Australia relations touched a **historic low** when the **Australian Government condemned India's 1998 nuclear tests.**
- ❖ 2014: In 2014, Australia signed a **Uranium supply deal** with India, the first of its kind with a country that is a **non-signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty**, in recognition of India's "impeccable" non-proliferation record.

Bilateral Relation:



Economic:

- ❖ Over \$31 billion (India's exports: over \$10 billion and imports at \$17 billion).
- ❖ **Economic Cooperation Trade Agreement (ECTA)** is the first free trade agreement signed by India with a developed country in a decade which entered into force in December 2022.

Defence:

- ❖ "Malabar" exercises in August 2023 (India, Australia, Japan, and the US), India has been invited to join the Talisman Sabre exercises in 2024.
- ❖ Mutual Logistics Support Agreement (MLSA) (signed between both countries in 2022) to enhance military interoperability
- ❖ The 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue (2022)

Shared Values:

- ❖ Westminster-style democracies



- ❖ Commonwealth traditions
- ❖ Expanding economic engagement
- ❖ A free press
- ❖ An independent judicial system

People to people ties

- ❖ India is one of the top sources of skilled immigrants to Australia. As per the 2021 Census, around **9.76 lakh people in Australia reported their ancestry as Indian origin**, making them the second largest group of overseas-born residents in Australia.

Strategic Indo-Pacific partnership

- ❖ Shared vision: Free, open, and inclusive Indo-Pacific region, based on respect for sovereignty, territorial integrity, and international law.
- ❖ Multi-lateral engagements: G20, India-Pacific Infrastructure Partnership (IPIP), the Indo-Pacific Economic Framework (IPEF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Multilateral Cooperation:

- ❖ Both are members of the **Quad**
- ❖ Commonwealth
- ❖ **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)**
- ❖ **ASEAN Regional Forum**
- ❖ Asia Pacific Partnership on Climate and Clean Development
- ❖ Participated in the **East Asia Summits**.

Issues in the relation: India-Australia relations face several challenges, including the controversy over the Adani coal mine project, which caused tensions due to protests by activists. Visa restrictions for Indian students and professionals seeking to work in Australia have also been a concern. Additionally, attacks on the Indian diaspora and temples by Khalistan supporters have caused strains in the relationship.

Way forward: The India-Australia relationship has grown stronger due to shared interests, values, and goals. Both countries want a free, inclusive, and rules-based Indo-Pacific region, and they aim to resolve any disagreements or conflicts through peaceful means

Previous year Question

Australia's interests do not just align with India's; they are inextricably entwined. Discuss. (150 words)

17. SRI LANKA'S RECOVERY | THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INDIA'S SUPPORT

Source: The Hindu

News: Sri Lankan President announced that the country had cleared the last hurdles to be approved for a \$2.9 billion bailout from the IMF. The country has been reeling from the **covid crisis, economic mismanagement** by the Rajapakse regime, **mounting debts** → soaring inflation → GDP/ Exports collapse → Currency collapse.



What are IMF bailout?

IMF Bailout are a form of financial support provided by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to countries facing major macroeconomics risks, typically in the form of currency crisis, balance of payments, or significant decline in economic growth.

IMF bailout for Sri Lanka means:

- ❖ Increases the system's creditworthiness and confidence.
- ❖ A lot of other agencies like the **World Bank, AIIB, and ADB**, have lined up funds to come in.



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- ❖ Debt becomes more sustainable → access to the capital market → stabilizing the economy.



How India Helped Sri Lanka?

- ❖ India's support to Sri Lanka (worth a combined \$4 bn) includes –
 - ❖ Shipments of grain, fuel, essentials, medicines
 - ❖ Credit lines
 - ❖ Debt repayment relief
 - ❖ Support at the IMF to work on the bailout package
 - ❖ Support at the G20 and BIMSTEC

Sri Lankan response to India

- ❖ “India had really come to our rescue, **India had provided us with a lifeline** which allowed us to stay afloat during a very difficult time,” Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka.
- ❖ In a speech on Women's day, Sri Lankan President **thanked 3 women** – Nirmala Sitharaman, Janet Yellen, and Kristalina Georgieva for helping Sri Lanka.
- ❖ Sri Lanka is looking for **more investments from India** in IT, pharmaceuticals, the energy sector, education, etc.

Challenges ahead:

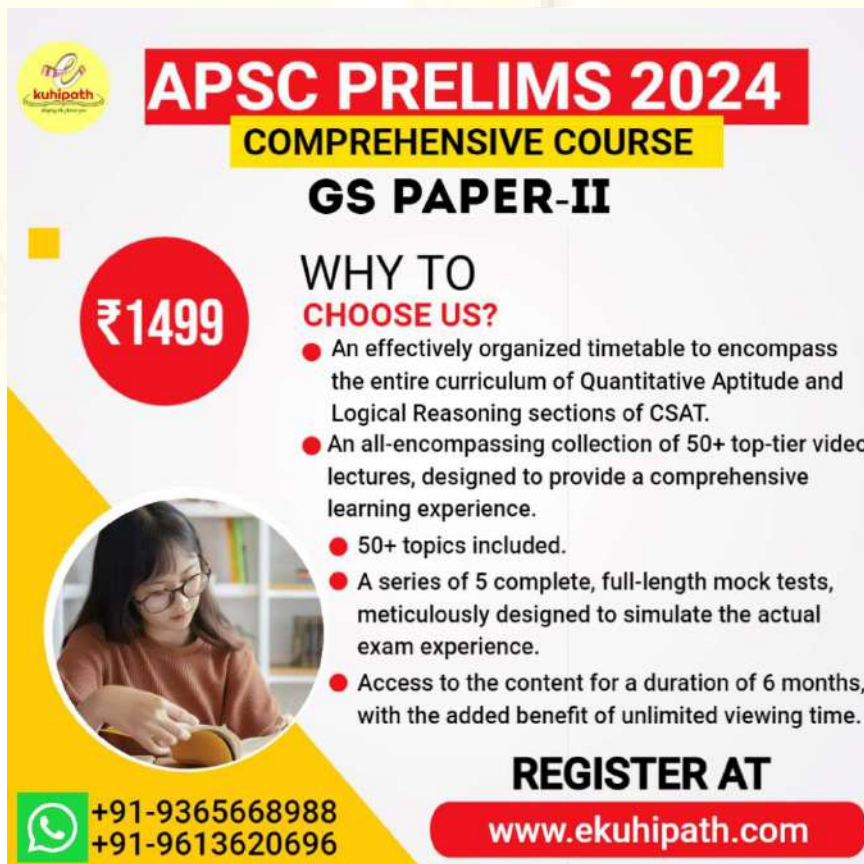
❖ For India:

- ❖ **The controversy over Adani projects in Sri Lanka** (2 wind power plants in Mannar and Pooneryn areas of [northern] Sri Lanka, West Container Terminal at Colombo Port, etc).
- ❖ The opposition had raised issues over the manner of choosing the company.

❖ For Sri Lanka:

- ❖ Sri Lanka has been a **very close friend of India** and doesn't want to hurt **India's security concerns**.
- ❖ Despite all the problems China is also India's biggest [trading] partner.
- ❖ Similarly, Sri Lanka also **wants to work with Indians and the Chinese, and the rest**.

Conclusion: Sri Lankan crisis and reversal is a good example for the region – it is about being more sensitive to a neighbor's needs rather than outspending rivals.



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18. US SENATE RESOLUTION FOR UNDERLINING BACKING INDIA ON MCMAHON LINE

Source: Indian Express

News: In the upper chamber of Congress, two senators from the United States have submitted a bipartisan resolution emphasising that the US recognises the McMahon Line as the international border between China and India in Arunachal Pradesh.

- ❖ The resolution reaffirms **India's well-known and established position that Arunachal Pradesh, which China calls 'South Tibet', is an integral part of India.**



Fig: Disputed areas between India and China

McMahon Line

- ❖ The McMahon Line serves as the **de facto boundary between China and India in the Eastern Sector.**
- ❖ It specifically represents the **boundary between Arunachal Pradesh and Tibet, from Bhutan in the west to Myanmar in the east.**
- ❖ China has historically disputed the **boundary and claims the state of Arunachal Pradesh as part of the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR).**

Under what circumstances was it drawn

- ❖ The McMahon Line was drawn during the **Shimla Convention of 1914**, officially described as the **Convention Between Great Britain, China, and Tibet**.
- ❖ China was represented at the convention by the **government of the Republic of China, which was in power in the mainland from 1912 to 1949**.
- ❖ The McMahon Line **delimited the respective spheres of influence of Tibet and British India in the eastern Himalayan region in what is today India's Northeast and northern Myanmar**. The border in this region was undefined prior to the signing of the convention.

What happened at the Shimla Convention of 1913-14?

- ❖ The convention attempted to **settle the question of Tibet's sovereignty and avoid further territorial disputes in the region**.
- ❖ The treaty divided the Buddhist region into **"Outer Tibet" and "Inner Tibet"** – the former would **"remain in the hands of the Tibetan Government at Lhasa under Chinese suzerainty"**, though China was not allowed to interfere in its affairs.
- ❖ The latter would be **under the direct jurisdiction of the newly formed Republic of China**.
- ❖ The latter of these newly decided boundaries would later be called the **McMahon Line** after McMahon, the chief British negotiator.

Why China did not sign the convention:

- ❖ Arguing that Tibet had no independent authority to enter into international agreements.

How was the border between British India and China decided?

- ❖ Following the **"highest watershed principle"**. This principle, considered to be the most logical way of drawing borders in mountainous regions by the British, basically drew the border along the highest ridge between two river plains.



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Status of the McMahon line since 1914:

- ❖ After the communists took power in 1949, they pulled China out of all international agreements and the so-called “unequal treaties”.

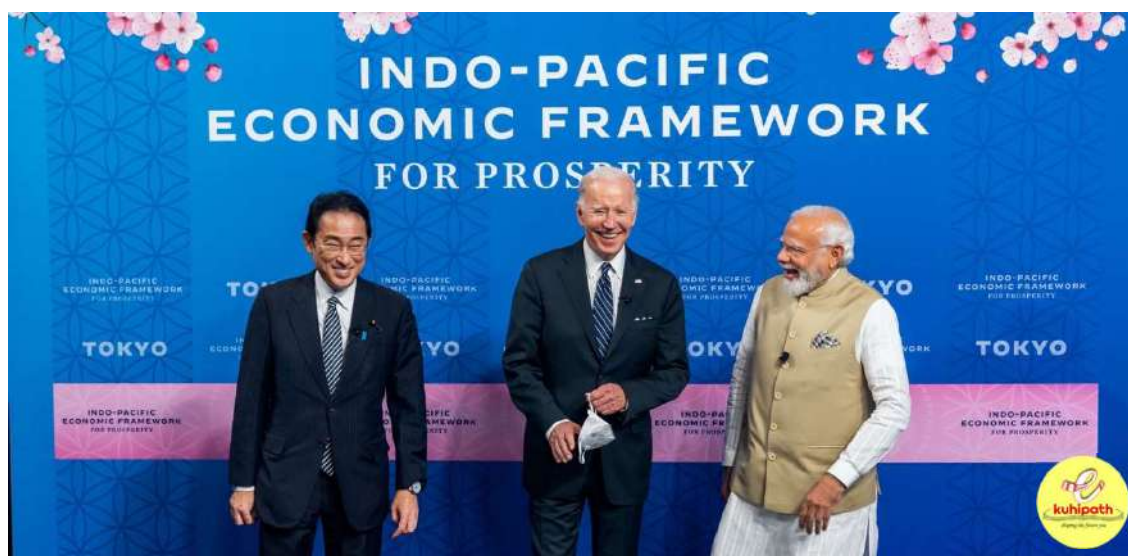


Fig:McMahon Line

19. INDO-PACIFIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK (IPEF)

Source: PIB

News: An Inter-Ministerial delegation from India led by the Department of Commerce participated in the **second** Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF) negotiating round in Bali, Indonesia.



About IPEF:

- ❖ It is a **US-led initiative** that aims to **strengthen economic partnerships among participating countries** to enhance **resilience, sustainability, inclusiveness, economic growth, fairness, and competitiveness in the Indo-Pacific region**.
- ❖ **Launched in 2021** with a dozen initial partners who together represent **40% of the world GDP**.

The IPEF is not a **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** but allows members to negotiate the parts they want. **The negotiations will be along four main “pillars”**.

- ❖ Supply-chain resilience
- ❖ Clean energy, decarbonisation & infrastructure
- ❖ Taxation & anti-corruption
- ❖ Fair & resilient

20. INDIA AND THE KOREAN WAR

Source: Indian Express

News: In its G20 year, India has shown renewed interest in the only other diplomatic intervention by India in a distant war (apart from the recent Russian-Ukraine) seven decades ago – **The Korean War**.



The Korean war:

- ❖ It was fought between **North Korea** (supported by China and the then Soviet Union and invaded South Korea) and **South Korea** (supported by the US and allied countries) in **1950** and ended with an armistice in **1953**.
- ❖ It was the result of the **Cold War** rivalry between the then superpowers US (capitalist) and the Soviet Union (communist).
- ❖ The peninsula had been divided at the **end of World War II** along the **38th Parallel**, with Soviet and US forces occupying the North and South respectively.
- ❖ **In 1948**, after the two Koreas declared themselves separate countries, and held their own elections, the occupying forces departed.

- ❖ However, neither the North nor the South accepted the other and **both claim the entire Korean peninsula** even today.

India's lesser-known role in the war:

- ❖ India played a unique role, having **no specific geo-political interests** in the Korean Peninsula and maintaining a **neutral position**, and believing in the **reunification of the peninsula**.
- ❖ India's view at this time was that giving the **People's Republic of China** admission into the UNSC could provide a resolution in Korea.
- ❖ India made a **huge diplomatic push to prevent an escalation** into another world war, and for the parties to arrive at a quick ceasefire.
- ❖ India sent the **60th Parachute Field Ambulance**, which did outstanding work treating wounded soldiers.



India at the UN:

- ❖ At the time of the invasion, **India was among the six non-permanent members** of the UNSC.
- ❖ During its rotating presidency, **3 resolutions** (moved by the US) **on the war** came up in quick succession. **For example**, calling for a withdrawal of North troops from South territory, etc.
- ❖ The urgent problem of what to do with the **prisoners of war** was given to **K. Krishna Menon** – India's Permanent Representative to the UN and a member of the UN's Special Political Committee.
- ❖ A **Neutral Nations Repatriation Committee** was set up and India was selected to chair the committee.

Conclusion:

- ❖ In an essay, '**Between the Blocs: India, the UN, and Ending the Korean War**', British historian Robert Barnes recognised the key role played by India
 - ❖ To bring the Korean war to a swift conclusion **by reconciling the divergent positions of the two superpower blocs**, and
 - ❖ Prevent the UN from adopting a policy that might lead to its escalation.
- ❖ As the world grapples to find an end to the war in Ukraine, **India's role and its experience (in ending the Korean war, 70 years ago) can't be neglected.**



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3	02-05-2023	9:00 AM	GS III	03-05-2023	05-05-2023
4	06-05-2023	2:00 PM	GS IV	07-05-2023	08-05-2023
5	10-05-2023	9:00 AM	GS V	11-05-2023	12-05-2023
6	14-05-2023	9:00 AM	Essay	18-05-2023	16-05-2023
7	18-05-2023	9:00 AM	GS I	19-05-2023	20-05-2023
8	21-05-2023	2:00 PM	GS II	22-05-2023	23-05-2023
9	24-05-2023	9:00 AM	GS III	25-05-2023	26-05-2023
10	28-05-2023	2:00 PM	GS IV	29-05-2023	30-05-2023
11	01-06-2023	9:00 AM	GS V	02-06-2023	03-06-2023



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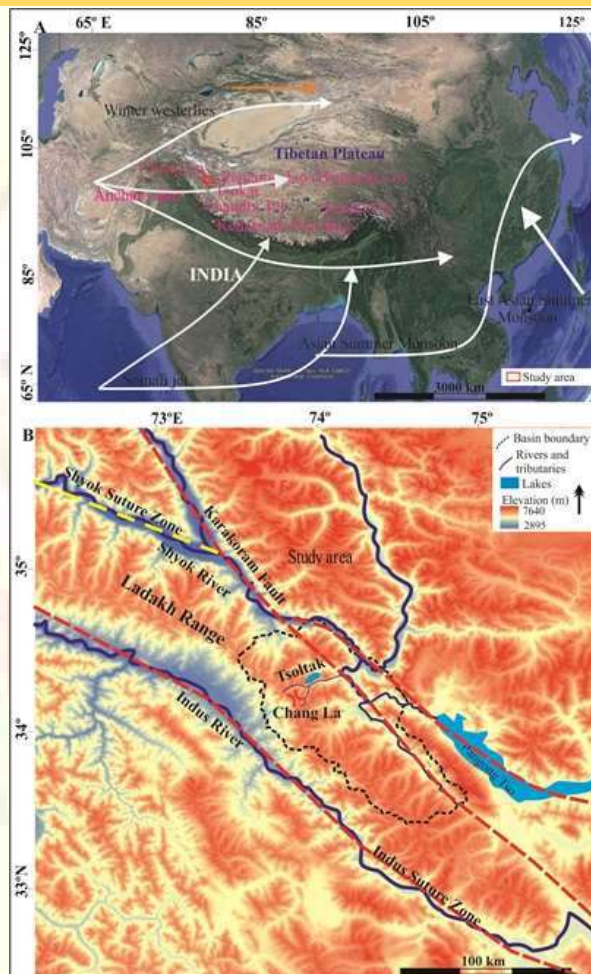
21. WESTERLIES GOVERNED THE CLIMATIC VARIATIONS AND LANDSCAPE OF TRANS-HIMALAYAS HISTORICALLY: STUDY

Source: Department of science and technology

News: A recent study has shown that the Westerlies had a bigger impact on the climate and landscape of the **Trans-Himalayan region** than the Indian Summer Monsoon. They also found that the **Westerlies and the Indian Summer Monsoon** had **periodic shifts** in defining the climatic variations of the region.

Background:

It was the Westerlies, or the permanent winds that blow from the subtropical high-pressure belts towards sub-polar low-pressure belts, and not the Indian Summer Monsoon (ISM), that governed the climatic variations and the evolution of its landscape, particularly during the Mid-Holocene Thermal Maxima (between 7075 and 6040 cal yr before present), according to a new study.



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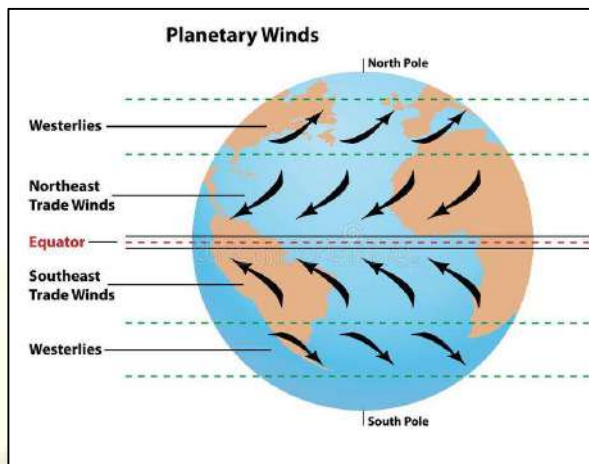


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Important key words:

Westerlies: Westerlies are the permanent winds that blow in the middle latitudes. They blow from the subtropical high-pressure belts towards sub-polar low-pressure belts. The westerlies of the Southern hemisphere are more robust and constant than the westerlies of the Northern hemisphere.

Trans Himalayan: This ranges in India include the Karakoram, Zaskar and Ladakh ranges that run through Ladakh and Himachal Pradesh.



How the researchers came to this conclusion?

- ❖ The researchers collected **sediments from glacial lakes in the Ladakh Range**, which provided a record of climate change over the last seven thousand years.

Significance of the study:

- ❖ It will help us **understand past climate changes, assess the impact of global warming** and climate variability, and help us plan for the future of the region.
- ❖ **The Himalayan region** is very important because it is one of the **most glaciated mountain regions** on Earth, outside the poles.



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22. CORAL REEFS DAMAGED

Source: Indian Express

News: Coral reefs are not looking too healthy as increased ocean temperature caused by climate change is the main cause of coral bleaching events.



Coral reefs:

- ❖ These are **limestone structures** (found in more than 100 countries) built by thousands of tiny coral creatures called **polyps** and belong to tropical areas.
- ❖ The planet has **already lost about half of its shallow-water corals** in the past three decades.
- ❖ At the current rate, up to **90%** of them will disappear by the middle of the century.

Significance of coral reef:

Rich Biodiversity: Coral reefs are home to a wide variety of life forms. One reef is home to tens of thousands of species. The Great Barrier Reef is home to around 400 different kinds of coral, 1,500 different kinds of fish, 4,000 different kinds of mollusks, and six of the world's seven different kinds of sea turtles.

Coastal Protection: Reefs are found along more than **150,000 km** of coastline in **more than 100 countries and territories**. They form a **barrier that absorbs** the forces of waves, currents, storms, hurricanes, etc. coming from the open sea, thereby reducing



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coastal erosion. Thus, they **protect both the ecosystems** between the **reefs and the coasts**, such as **lagoons** with **seagrass beds**, as well as human settlements along the coast.

Food source: Reef animals are an **important source of protein**. Coral reefs provide about **10% of the fish caught worldwide** (70-90% for the Southeast Asian countries)

Medicinal value: Coral organisms are being studied in the search for cures for certain cancers and cell ageing. The coral skeleton (which has been used for bone grafts since 1970) is a promising lead for bone regeneration.

Tourism: Most of the gross national product of countries with coral reef industries comes from the tourism sector due to these beautiful corals. A study had estimated that the value of coral reefs was \$10 billion and the direct economic benefits were approximately \$360 million per year.



Corals are important to marine life because of the following reasons:

- ❖ The health of the marine ecosystem is dependent on corals.
- ❖ They support a wide range of ecosystems and hence, are called the rainforests of the ocean.



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- ❖ Corals provide a place to live for a huge variety of fish.
- ❖ Corals are a primary source of food in the marine ecosystem.

Way ahead:

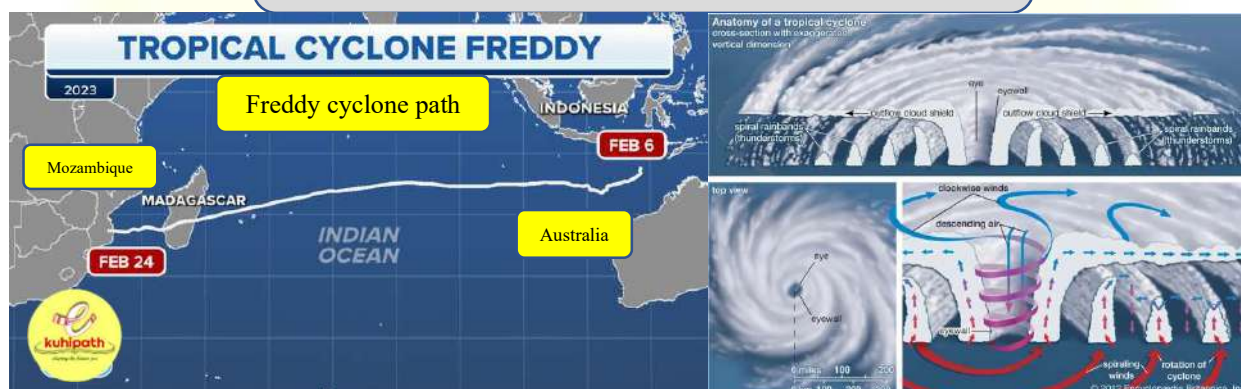
- ❖ Local restoration efforts by transplanting coral
- ❖ The establishment of **marine protected areas** which work like national parks
- ❖ Stopping run-off from agricultural and effluence
- ❖ **Controlling climate change**, which presents the biggest single threat to the future of coral reefs

23. FREDDY CYCLONE

Source: Down to Earth

News: Recently, the Indian Prime Minister, Sri Narendra Modi expressed deep grief over the loss of lives due to Cyclone Freddy in Malawi, Mozambique. Hundreds of people have been killed due to destructions caused by the cyclone Freddy.

Cyclone Freddy, which has been active for 32 days over the south Indian ocean, is now the longest-lived tropical cyclone on record.



Factors behind the long sustenance of Cyclone Freddy:

- ❖ **Global warming:** Absorption of greenhouse gases caused by humans by the oceans, which increases their heat content and thus aids in the strengthening of cyclones.
- ❖ **Low horizontal wind shear favoured its rapid intensification:** Horizontal wind shear is the horizontal winds around a cyclone.
- ❖ When these winds have lower speeds they help a cyclone grow in strength and when they have higher speeds they make it dissipate.
- ❖ **Warm sub-surface waters** helped the cyclone rapidly intensify multiple times

- ❖ Usually, the sub-surface water is colder and when it gets pushed towards the surface due to mixing as a result of cyclonic winds, it creates conditions that don't favour the intensification of cyclones

24. THE GOVERNMENT EMPHASIZES A HOLISTIC APPROACH TO DISASTER MANAGEMENT

Source: PIB

News: The 3rd Session of the **National Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (NPDRR)** has concluded in New Delhi.



About the Session:

- ❖ The session deliberated on 10-point agenda on Disaster Risk Reduction given by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and the Sendai Framework apart from other issues.
- ❖ **Organized by:**
 - Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)
 - National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)
 - National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)
 - National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM)
- ❖ **Theme:** "Building Local Resilience in a Changing Climate"

PM's 10-Point Agenda:

- ❖ **Importance of Local Resilience in Disaster Risk Reduction E.g.**
 - ❖ **Prime Minister's 10-Point Agenda:** Building local capacities and initiatives
 - ❖ **Kutch (Gujarat):** Bhunga houses of Kutch survived the earthquake to a large extent
 - ❖ **Kerala:** Traditional houses known as “Nalukettu,” are built with sloping roofs to prevent waterlogging during floods.
 - ❖ **Local Disaster volunteers:**g. Apada Mitra, Yuvak Mandal and Sakhi Mandal
- ❖ **Need for Development Sectors to Imbibe Principles of Disaster Risk Management**
- ❖ **Importance of Risk Coverage for All**
- ❖ **Women's Leadership** and Greater Involvement in Disaster Risk Management
- ❖ **Investment in Global Risk Mapping**
- ❖ **Leveraging Technology** for Disaster Risk Reduction
- ❖ **Developing a Network of Universities** to Work on Disaster-Related Issues
- ❖ **Utilizing Social Media and Mobile Technologies** for Disaster Risk Reduction
- ❖ **Learning from Disasters through Post-Disaster Studies**
- ❖ **Need for Greater Cohesion in International Response** to Disasters E.g. in wake of the recent Earthquake in Syria and Turkey, **United Nations Satellite Centre (UNOSAT)** activated its emergency GIS mapping service

What is Disaster Risk Reduction?

- ❖ Disaster risk reduction is **aimed at preventing new and reducing existing disaster risks and managing residual risk**, all of which contribute to strengthening resilience and therefore to the achievement of sustainable development.

Initiatives for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)

- ❖ **Global:**
 - ❖ **Sendai Framework (2015):** Successor instrument to the Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA)
 - ❖ **Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, 2022**
 - ❖ **Climate Risk and Early Warning Systems (CREWS)** (Under the World Meteorological Organization): It provides access to early warnings in the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).
 - ❖ **Sectoral Guide on Climate Information & Early Warning Systems** (by Green Climate Fund): It identifies investment opportunities in him impact sector for DRR

❖ India's Initiatives:

- ❖ **Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure Society (CDRIS):** To increase the resilience of infrastructure systems to climate and disaster risks
- ❖ **National Disaster Management Plan 2016 (NDMP):** To coordinate response to natural or man-made disasters and for capacity-building in disaster resiliency and crisis response.
- ❖ **India aims to achieve zero mortality in all disasters** in collaboration with state governments and response agencies
- ❖ The Disaster Management Act, 2005, seeks to mainstream disaster risk reduction into development planning

25. THE GREAT RIFT: AFRICA'S SPLITTING PLATES COULD GIVE BIRTH TO A NEW OCEAN, BUT WITH CONSEQUENCES

Source: Down to Earth

News: Scientists, in 2020, predicted a new ocean would be created as Africa gradually splits into two separate parts.



- ❖ The division of the continent is connected to the **East African Rift**, which appeared in the **desert of Ethiopia in 2005**, triggering the formation of a new sea.

About rifting:

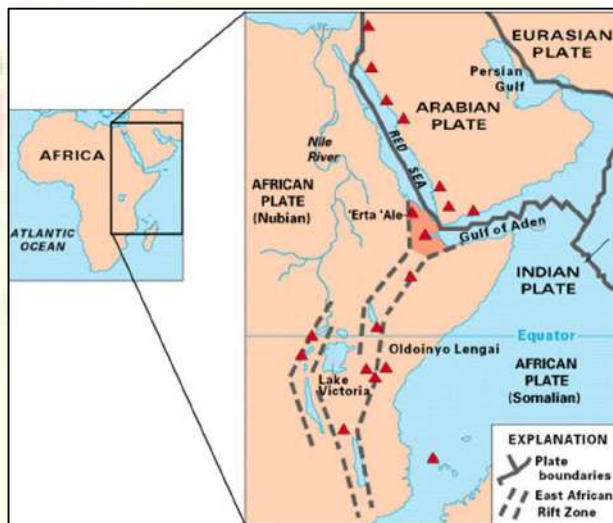
- ❖ Rifting refers to the geological process in which a **single tectonic plate is split into two or more plates separated by divergent plate boundaries.**
- ❖ This process leads to the **emergence of a lowland region known as a rift valley, which can occur either on land or at the bottom of the ocean.** These rift valleys occur due to the movement of Earth's tectonic plates.

What is happening in Africa?

- ❖ The three plates — **the Nubian African Plate, Somali African Plate and Arabian Plate** — are **separating at different speeds.**
- ❖ The **Arabian Plate is moving away from Africa** at a rate of about an inch per year, while the two African plates are separating even slower.
- ❖ As the **Somali and Nubian tectonic plates continue to pull apart from each other, a smaller continent will be created from the rift,** which will include present-day Somalia and parts of Kenya, Ethiopia, and Tanzania.
- ❖ This new ocean will result in **East Africa becoming a separate small continent with its own unique geographic and ecological characteristics.**

Challenges and consequences of this rifting:

- ❖ **Displacement** of communities, settlements and various flora and fauna.
- ❖ Impact their **habitats due to climate change,** resulting in **environmental degradation.**
- ❖ **Rapid urbanisation and increased settlements** will put pressure on natural resources, leading to a scarcity of water, energy and food.
- ❖ Uncontrolled waste disposal.
- ❖ **Some species will disappear, while others will become endangered due to habitat changes.**



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26. HOW INDIA'S SUGAR SHIPMENTS TO THE WORLD ARE SURGING

Source: Indian Express

Context: India has become world No. 2 in sugar export, behind only Brazil.

Data:

- ❖ India's sugar export (in 2016-17) was **0.46 lakh tonnes (lt)**, which has now increased to **110 lt** by **2021-22**.
- ❖ India is the **world's largest producer and consumer of sugar**
- ❖ **Importers of Indian Raw Sugar:** Indonesia, Bangladesh, and Saudi Arabia

CHART 1

INDIA'S SUGAR EXPORTS IN VALUE

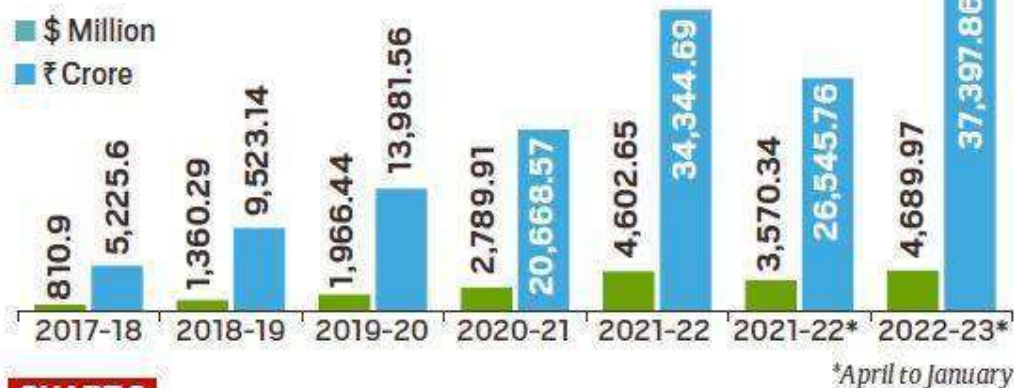


CHART 2

INDIA'S SUGAR EXPORTS IN LAKH TONNES

Sugar Year	Raw Sugar	White Sugar***	Total
2016-17	0	0.46	0.46
2017-18	0.47	5.73	6.2
2018-19	13.13	24.87	38
2019-20	17.84	41.56	59.4
2020-21	28.16	43.74	71.9
2021-22	56.29	53.71	110
2022-23**	19.13	30.91	50.04

Note: Sugar Year is from Oct-Sept

As on March 15; *Includes refined sugar



Government Policies for higher Sugar Production:

❖ Pricing:

- ❖ **Fair and remunerative price (FRP):** The FRP is the minimum price that sugar mills have to pay to sugarcane farmers for the procurement of sugarcane.
- ❖ **State-Advised Price:** Although the Central government decides the FRP the state governments can also set a State Advised price that a sugar mill has to pay to the farmers.

- ❖ **Encouraging Ethanol Production** to be used in Ethanol Blending with Petrol (EBP) Programme
- ❖ Scheme for Extending Financial Assistance to Sugar Undertakings (SEFASU)
- ❖ **National Policy on Biofuels 2018.**

Concerns:

Lower stocks, lower production and concerns about domestic availability and food inflation have led the government to **cap India's exports** in the current sugar year. However, once the overseas markets are lost, they are not easy to regain.

Conclusion:

Rangarajan committee (2012) has recommended the abolition of the quantitative controls on the export and import of sugar, these should be replaced by appropriate tariffs.

About Sugar Industry:

- ❖ The sugar industry is the **second largest agro-based industry** in India after cotton.
- ❖ **Employment:** 50 million sugarcane farmers and around 5 lakh workers are directly employed in sugar mills.



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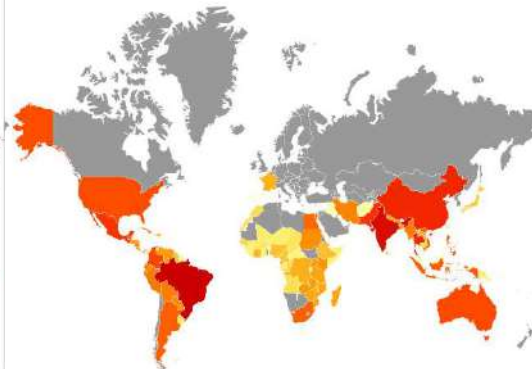
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Discuss the significance of the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for sugar.



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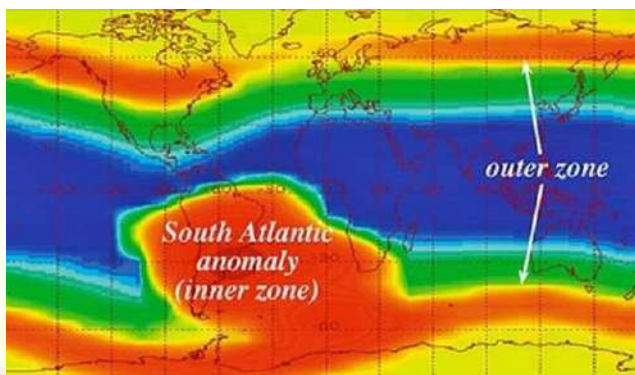
27. SOUTH ATLANTIC ANOMALY

Source: Science alert

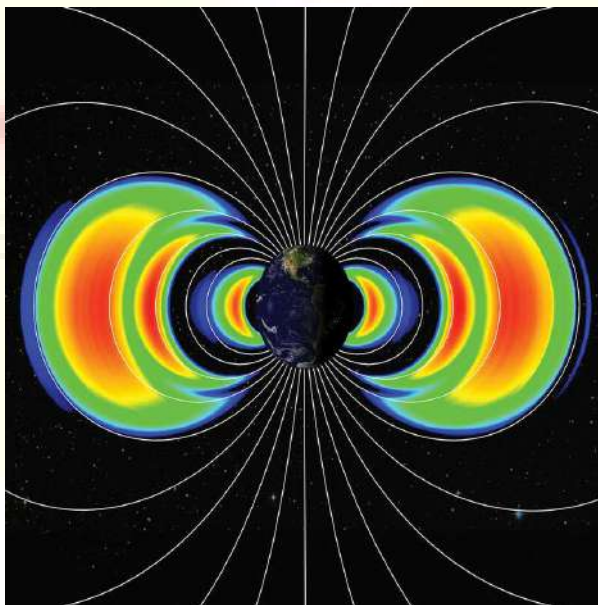
News: NASA is monitoring South Atlantic Anomaly in Earth's magnetic field between South America and southwest Africa.

South Atlantic Anomaly (SAA):

The South Atlantic Anomaly is a weak spot in Earth's magnetic field, which protects the planet from high doses of solar wind and cosmic radiation.

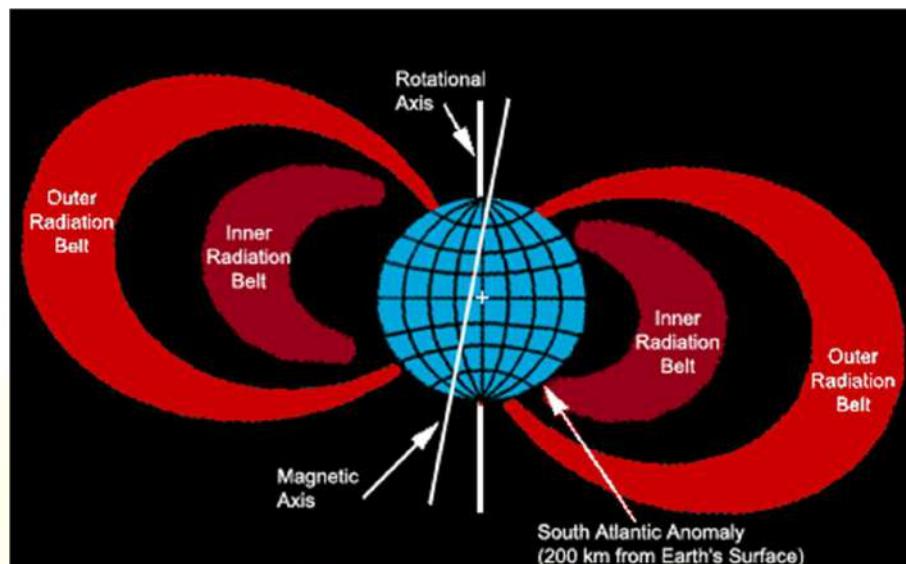


Cause of SAA: This anomaly exists because the Earth's inner Van Allen radiation belt comes closest to the planet's surface, causing an increased flux of energetic particles. This leads to the penetration of solar energetic particles deep into Earth's atmosphere.



What is Van Allen radiation ?

- ❖ It is a zone of **energetic charged particles**, most of which originate from the solar wind, that are captured by and held around a planet by that planet's magnetosphere.



28. WITHOUT ACTION PLANS, INDIA'S POOREST WILL CONTINUE TO BEAR BRUNT OF HEATWAVES: STUDY

Source: The Hindu

News: Of the 37 plans it analysed, the Centre for Policy Research found that nearly all of them failed to target vulnerable groups, are underfunded and have weak legal foundation. A new report by the think-tank Centre for Policy Research on “**How is India Adapting to Heatwaves?**” indicates that the country is ill-prepared to face the heat.

What are HAPs?

- ❖ Landmark heatwaves (1998, 2002, 2010, 2015, 2022) have **led to large death tolls and extensive economic damage** by reducing labour productivity and affecting water availability, agriculture and energy systems.
- ❖ Governments across India have responded by creating **heat action plans (HAPs)**, which prescribe a variety of measures (to decrease the impact of heatwaves) –
 - ❖ Preparatory activities
 - ❖ Post-heatwave response



- ❖ The report analysed **37 HAPs** at the city (9), district (13) and State (15) levels across 18 States, to evaluate how policy action is keeping up with the warming weather in India.

Findings of the report:

- ❖ **Heat waves** (prolonged periods of extreme heat) **have increased in frequency** in recent decades due to climate change.
- ❖ HAPs are not built for local contexts.
- ❖ Nearly all HAPs –
 - ❖ Fail to identify and target vulnerable groups
 - ❖ Are **underfunded** with weak legal foundations → reduces bureaucratic incentives to prioritise and comply with HAPs instructions
 - ❖ Are insufficiently transparent
- ❖ Only 2 HAPs carry out and present **vulnerability assessments** (systematic studies to locate where the people most likely to be affected are in a city, district, or State).
- ❖ There is **no national repository of HAPs** and very few HAPs are listed online.

What is a heat wave?

- ❖ A heat wave is a period of abnormally and uncomfortably hot and usually humid weather. According to the World Meteorological, a heat wave is when the daily maximum temperature for more than five consecutive days exceeds the average maximum temperature by 9 degrees Fahrenheit. The heat wave is considered if the **maximum temperature of a station reaches at least 40°C** for Plains and **at least 30°C** for Hilly regions.
- ❖ **Based on Actual Maximum Temperature:**
 - ❖ **Heat Wave:** When actual maximum temperature is greater than 45 degree Celsius.
 - ❖ **Severe Heat Wave:** When actual maximum temperature greater than 47 degree Celsius.

Govt initiatives:

- ❖ Mission LiFE (Lifestyle for Environment)
- ❖ Environment Education Programme (EEP)
- ❖ National Programme on Climate Change and Human Health
- ❖ India Meteorological Department (IMD)
- ❖ The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and IMD
- ❖ Water Technology Initiative (WTI)
- ❖ Per Drop More Crop (PDMC) scheme
- ❖ The Start-up India Seed Fund scheme (SISFS)

Recommendations:

- ❖ **HAPs must identify sources of financing**
- ❖ Set up **rigorous independent evaluations** as a basis for constant improvement.
- ❖ **Raise public awareness**

Heat Index (HI): IMD will soon issue a **Heat Index** (in addition to the day's maximum and minimum temperatures). Heat index will be a colour-based warning that will give an **estimation of what temperature actually feels like**. It will consider Relative humidity, Wind speed, Maximum temperature and Cloud cover of a particular day.

Usage of HI:

- ❖ It will not only **warn against Heat waves hazard** but also list precautions people can take.
- ❖ Calculation of HI will **help states in formulating better Heat Action Plans (HAPs)** for heatwave assessment, forecast, preparedness and mitigation.

Previous year question (UPSC 2015)

“Each day is more or less the same, the morning is clear and bright with a sea breeze; as the Sun climbs high in the sky, heat mounts up, dark clouds form, then the rain comes with thunder and lightning. But the rain is soon over.”

Which of the following regions is described in the above passage?

1. Savannah
2. Equatorial
3. Monsoon
4. Mediterranean

Ans: 2



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HISTORY AND ART & CULTURE

29.AURANGABAD TO SAMBHAJI NAGAR – HISTORY OF THE PLACE

Source: The Hindu

Context: After the **approval of the Ministry of Home Affairs**, the name of Aurangabad has been changed to Chhatrapati Sambhaji Nagar.



Historical features of Aurangabad/Sambhaji Nagar:

- ❖ Aurangzeb is buried in Khuldabad, near Aurangabad in Maharashtra, India
- ❖ Built by Aurangzeb in Aurangabad in 1660 for his wife, Bibi ka Maqbara is half the size of the Taj Mahal and covered in burnished stucco. Introduces a new architectural style of the 17th and 18th centuries.
- ❖ Fort in Daulatabad was the capital of the Yadava dynasty and later became part of the Ahmednagar Sultanate.
- ❖ Ellora caves are the largest rock-cut Hindu temple with 100 caves dating back to Rashtrakuta and Yadava dynasties.
- ❖ Both are UNESCO World Heritage Sites and predate the Mughal and Maratha periods in Aurangabad's history.



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30.ATTUKAL PONGALA

Source: The Hindu

Context: The Attukal Pongala falls on the **ninth day of the annual ten-day festival at the Attukal Bhagavathy Temple, Thiruvananthapuram.**

About Pongala:

- ❖ It is one of the **world's largest gatherings of women.**
- ❖ Pongala is a **ten-day-long festival of Attukal Bhagavathy Temple.**
- ❖ The festival commences with the **musical rendering of the story of the Goddess** (Kannaki Charitam) during the “Kappu Kettu ceremony”.
- ❖ The story invokes the presence of **Kodungallur Bhagavathy and the slaying of the Pandyan King.** This festival commemorates the **victory of Good over Evil, by the slaying of the Pandyan King.**

About Attukal Bhagavathy temple:

- ❖ Dedicated to **Goddess Bhagavathy.**
- ❖ Also known as, “**the Sabarimala of Women**”, this temple attracts the biggest set of women devotees for the annual Attukal Pongala festival.



31.DIFFERENT FACES OF THE INDIAN WOMEN'S MOVEMENT

Source: The Hindu

News: The vibrancy of the Indian women's movement is acknowledged worldwide with the Indian women's movement undergoing a gradual transformation over the years. Over the years, its thrust has moved from serving as the beacon for the nationalist movement to a rights-based civil society movement to a state-led movement for economic empowerment. According to The Economic Survey, there are about 1.2 crore SHGs in India, most of which are all women. The key is to not put all eggs in the single basket of state-led programmes and to ensure that other spaces for women's activism are preserved.



Phases of Women's movement in India:

Political Movements :

- ❖ All India Women's Conference (1927) → salt satyagraha (1930) → Quit India movement (1942).
- ❖ Acceptance of women's leadership in politics, setting the stage for grass-roots mobilisation, and increased participation in electoral politics.



Grassroots Organizing for Legal and Policy Reforms:

- ❖ The **quiet revolution of the 1970s** did as much to enhance attention to women's specific needs **as street protests**.
- ❖ The **Self-Employed Women's Association** began to **unionize women** in the informal sector, leading the advocacy for reforms in legal and social protection for women workers.
- ❖ **Feminist advocacy** highlighted sex-selective abortion and discrimination in inheritance patterns, leading to legal reforms.
- ❖ Women's formal and informal collectives worked hard to reform and implement **laws against sexual harassment in the workforce** and in public spaces.
- ❖ Nirbhaya, Shaheen Bagh and Sabarimala protests.

State-led Organizations for Economic Empowerment

- ❖ It is the latest epoch in women's activism and is distinct from the strident politics of protest and quietly organized rights-based movements.
- ❖ The government has **invested heavily in building and supporting Self Help Groups (SHGs)**.
- ❖ Today there are about 1.2 crore SHGs in India, most of which are all-women, typically **supported and mentored by Community Resource Persons paid by the state**.
- ❖ SHGs function **mainly as thrift and credit institutions**, where members deposit small amounts of savings per month and can borrow in an emergency.
- ❖ The current generation of the SHG movement, in close connection with the **National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM)**, **seeks to address deficiencies** in different schemes of the government.

Previous Year Mains question




‘Women’s movement in India has not addressed the issues of women of lower social strata.’ Substantiate your view. (UPSC 2018)


32.WOMEN AND NATION BUILDING: 1857 TO THE REPUBLIC


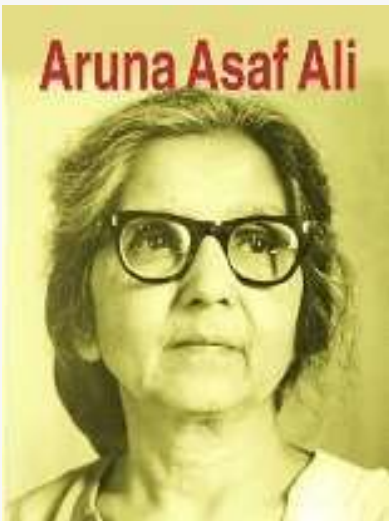
Source: PIB

Context: On the occasion of the **133rd Foundation Day of the National Archives of India**, an exhibition has highlighted the contributions of women in nation-building and freedom struggle from 1857 to 1950.

Some examples of the contributions made by women in nation-building and the freedom struggle from 1857 to 1950:

Name		Example
Rani Lakshmi Bai		Rani Lakshmi Bai is famously known for her valiant stand against the British in the Siege of Jhansi .
Begum Hazrat Mahal		Begum Hazrat Mahal was a key figure in the Lucknow uprising and led a force of rebels against the British in the battle of Chinhath .
Sarojini Naidu		Sarojini Naidu was a prominent Indian nationalist and was the first Indian woman to be president of the Indian National Congress. Participated in the Indian National Movement, and was a key figure in the Non-Cooperation Movement . Her work as a poet earned her the title of ' Nightingale of India ' from Mahatma Gandhi.

Name		Example
Annie Besant		Annie Besant was an Irish-born British writer, activist, and Theosophist who supported Indian self-rule. Advocated for Indian self-rule (Home Rule Movement) and supported the Indian National Congress Her contributions include being one of the founders of the Banaras Hindu University
Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay		Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay was a social reformer . She played an important role in promoting Indian handicrafts and empowering women.
Begum Rokeya		Begum Rokeya was a writer, educator, and social activist who worked for women's education and advocated for women's rights. She was the founder of the first school for Muslim girls in British India. Worked for women's education and was a pioneer of women's rights in India

Name		Example
Madam Bhikaji Cama		<p>She was involved in the home-rule movement. She was instrumental in demanding equal rights for all Indians, regardless of religion or gender. She unfurled the Indian Tricolor Flag (this was the first time an Indian flag was flown outside of India) at Stuttgart (Germany) in 1907. She is also known as the ‘Mother of Indian Revolution’</p>
Aruna Asaf Ali		<p>She was a political leader who participated in the Quit India Movement of 1942. She hoisted the Indian National flag at the Gowalia Tank maidan, Bombay during the Quit India Movement in 1942. She is known as the ‘Grand Old Lady of Indian Independence’ for her role in the freedom struggle.</p>

Limitations: These limitations included **social restrictions** that confined women to traditional roles, a **lack of education** that limited their participation and communication abilities, **limited access to resources**, **gender discrimination** within the movement, and a **patriarchal society** that did not consider women equal to men, resulting in their voices being silenced and opinions not taken seriously. **Conclusion:** Despite these limitations, many women played a significant role in the independence movement, paving the way for future generations of women to follow.

33. THE ELEPHANT WHISPERERS

Source: Down to Earth

News: Pictures and videos of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Theppakadu Elephant Camp at the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve are going viral on the internet. During his visit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi also interacted with the main stars of the Oscar-winning documentary, *The Elephant Whisperers* – Bomman and Bellie



About Mudumalai Tiger Reserve

- ❖ Mudumalai Tiger Reserve is located in the **Nilgiris District of Tamil Nadu** state at the tri-junction of three states, viz, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu. It is a **part of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve** (1st Biosphere Reserve in India). The Reserve has tall grasses, commonly referred to as **‘Elephant Grass’**.

34.BUMCHU FESTIVAL

Source: Sikkim Tourism

News: It is held annually at **Tashiding Monastery in West Sikkim** on the 15th day of the first month of the Lunar calendar (usually in February or March)



- ❖ **Name:** Bumchu means “**pot of sacred water**” in Tibetan
- ❖ **Features:** The festival is centred around the opening of a vessel containing holy water, which is believed to be an indicator of the fortunes of the coming year.
- ❖ **History:** It commemorates a **supernatural occurrence** that took place under Chogyal Chakdor Namgya (in the 18th century)
- ❖ The festival attracts devotees from all over Sikkim and neighbouring countries such as Bhutan and Nepal.



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35.NAVROZ FESTIVAL

Source: Indian Express



NAVROZ 

Why in news? On August 16, 2022, Navroz or the Parsi New Year is being celebrated.

About

- It is the most widely celebrated festival of the Parsi community.
- This is seen as a harbinger of peace and prosperity.

SPECIFICATIONS

- The festival is celebrated with grand lunch and dinner with the best and finest variety of Parsi cuisine.
- Parsis see this festival as the great occasion to get together, eat & mingle.

RITUALS AND BELIEFS

- Parsis visit the Agyaris or the fire temples to offer prayers.
- They feed the poor on this day, as the new year has to start on a good note.



- ❖ Navroz is the new year celebrations for Parsis (**Zoroastrians**) and Muslims (both Shia and **Sunni**).
- ❖ It is celebrated on **21st March** every year.
- ❖ In 1079 AD, a Persian (Iranian) king named Jalaluddin Malekshah introduced this festival to **generate revenue and collect taxes from people**.
- ❖ It was observed on March 21 to mark the **beginning of spring and the day of equinox**.
 - ❖ The equinoxes are the **only time when both the Northern and Southern Hemisphere experience roughly equal amounts of daytime and nighttime**.
 - ❖ The equinoxes happen in March (about **March 21**) and September (about **September 23**). These are the days when the Sun is exactly above the Equator, which makes day and night of equal length.
 - ❖ March equinox is also known as **vernal** or **spring** equinox and the September equinox is also known as **autumnal** or **fall** equinox.
- ❖ It is inscribed in the list of **UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity of India**.



❖ In India it is known as **Jamshed Navroz**.



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ECONOMICS

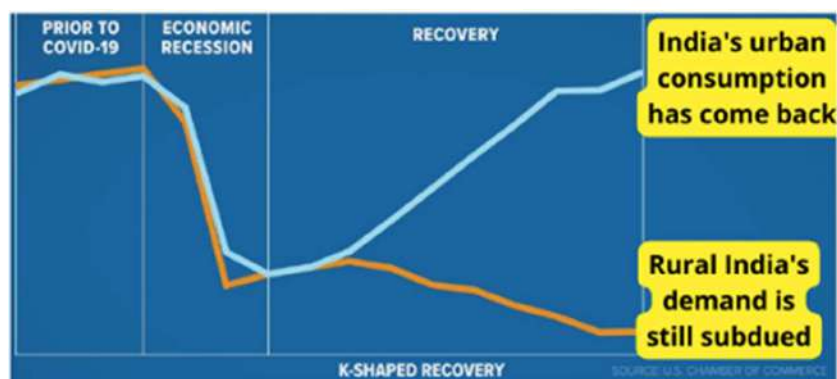
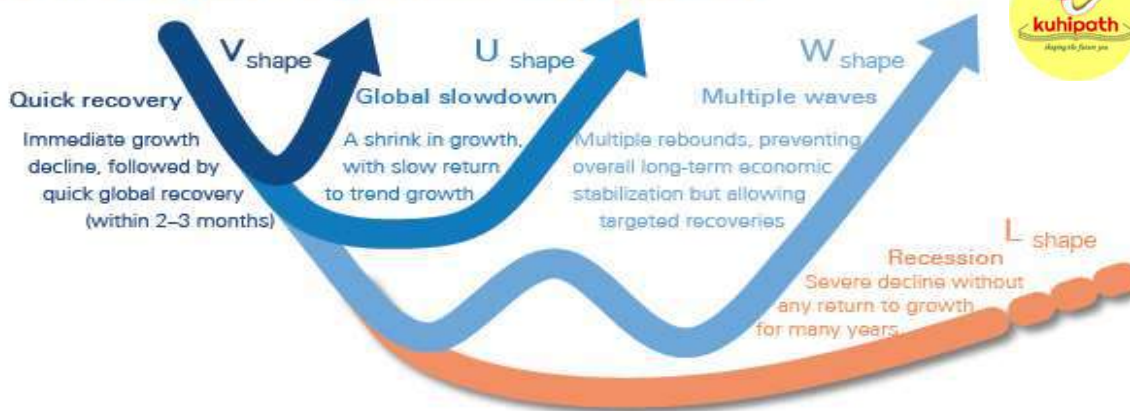
36.K-SHAPED' ECONOMIC RECOVERY

Source: Business Standard

Context: Chief Economic Advisor (CEA) V Anantha Nageswaran has said that describing India's recovery as '**K-shaped**' was **wrong** as both rural and urban economies were recovering but at different paces.

- ❖ Post Covid 19 Pandemic, India's urban and rural areas have seen different growth rates with urban recovery proceeding at a faster pace than rural recovery.

Four scenarios for economic development



Economic recovery:

Many economics have described India's post-pandemic recovery as K-shaped, contending that while the urban consumption has come back, rural demand hasn't as much.

The term coined by US economist Peter Atwater, it refers to a situation where things gets better for the haves, and worse for the have-nots (i.e. K shaped recovery show a situation of inequality)

37.THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RISE IN INDIA'S PETROLEUM PRODUCT EXPORTS TO THE EU

Source: Indian Express

Context: India's petroleum product exports to the EU have increased considerably over the past months as the region reduces imports of refined products from Russia, due to the war in Ukraine.

Background:

- ❖ India is a major refiner with an annual refining capacity of about **250 million tonnes**.
- ❖ While it is also one of the top consumers of crude oil, **India's refining capacity is higher than its domestic demand**.

What does the data show?

- ❖ India's petroleum product exports to the EU **rose 20.4%** year on year in April-January to **6 million tonnes**, with the region climbing to the top 20 regions importing refined products from India.
- ❖ According to the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics (DGCIS) data, **Indian refiners (particularly private) are rushing to partly fill the supply gap for the region**.

Why does the rise matter?

- ❖ **From the global oil markets perspective**, suppliers like India are helping maintain a demand-supply balance, while preventing extreme price shocks.

Benefits for India:

- ❖ **Indian refiners**, particularly export-oriented private sector players (Reliance Industries and Nayara Energy), **stand to gain** (purchase Russian oil at a discount).
- ❖ India now finds itself **playing an increasingly prominent role in the global crude oil and refined products supply map**.



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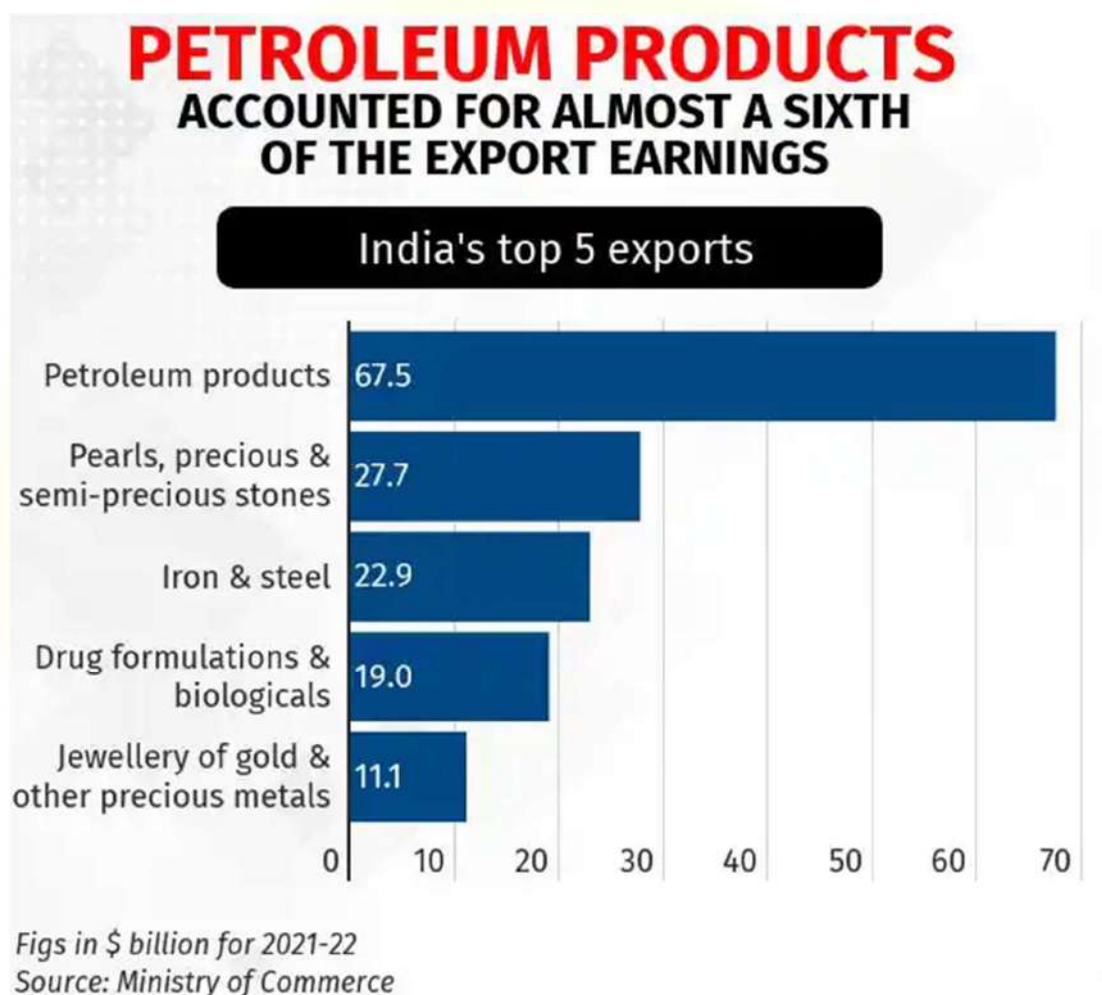
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What is the West's view on rising Indian exports to the EU?

- ❖ While the West was irked at India's rising purchases of Russian oil, countries like the US are **comfortable with the rising supply of Indian refined products to the EU**.
- ❖ They see it as **critical for the success of the price caps on Russian oil and refined products** (imposed by G7 countries) without causing a global supply shock.



Previous Year Mains question

Account for the failure of the manufacturing sector in achieving the goal of labour-intensive exports rather than capital-intensive exports. Suggest measures for more labour-intensive rather than capital-intensive exports. (UPSC 2017)

38. TOO-BIG-TO-FAIL BANKS/ D-SIBs

Source: Indian Express

News: Recent banking crisis in the US has raised the question of how secure Indian banks are in the age of start-ups and digitisation.

Background:

- ❖ Despite the recent bank failures in the US (SVB), which occurred more than a decade and a half after the 2008 global financial crisis, **Indian banks remained unaffected.**
- ❖ India has established **Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs)/Too-Big-To-Fail banks** to protect itself from 2008/SVB-like episodes.

The D-SIB framework was announced by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in 2014.

TOO-BIG-TO-FAIL BANKS

SBI, ICICI and HDFC Bank

Additional CET1 requirement
prescribed as per centage
of risk weighted assets

0.6%
SBI

0.2%
ICICI Bank,
HDFC Bank



RBI has classified SBI, ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank as D-SIB



Domestic Systemically Important Banks

- A bank that **might substantially disrupt the financial system** (because of its size, lack of substitutability, and interconnectedness) **in the event of its failure.**
- **In 2010**, the Switzerland-based Financial Stability Board (FSB) recommended that **all member countries should put in place a framework** to reduce risks attributable to Systemically Important Financial Institutions (SIFIs) in their jurisdictions.

- These banks have to earmark additional capital and provisions to safeguard their operations.
- **This avoids moral hazard** due to the perception that government support at times of distress encourages risk-taking, reduces market discipline, etc.

Significance

- The failure of a large bank anywhere can have a **contagion effect** around the world.
- The failure of a bank → damages confidence in the banking system → affects the domestic/global economy due to the interconnected financial systems.
- As a result, government action was seen as being necessary for many jurisdictions to guarantee financial stability.

TOO BIG TO FAIL

- Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs) classified into five grades (buckets)
- RBI to announce list every August starting this year
- Banks will have to fulfil extra capital requirement norms (common equity tier I capital)

Bucket	Banks	Additional common equity tier I need as % of RWAs*
5	—	1
4	—	0.8
3	SBI	0.6
2	—	0.4
1	ICICI	0.2

- Banks must meet the extra norms in three years by April 1, 2019
- Common equity tier I capital usually comprises a bank's equity capital, retained earnings and share premium

***RWAs: Risk weighted assets**

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39. TRADE IN RUPEE

Source: BS

Context: RBI has permitted banks from 18 countries to open **Special Vostro Rupee Accounts (SVRAs)** to settle payments in rupees

RBI TO NOW ALLOW SETTLEMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN RUPEES

The move will allow India and other countries to settle
trade transactions with the use of INR



Barring few trade agreements, the US Dollar has been the
default currency for international trade since 1945



**A LANDMARK DECISION THAT WILL REDUCE
INDIAN & GLOBAL DEPENDENCE ON THE USD
WHILE INCREASING DEMAND FOR THE RUPEE!**

What is the Internationalisation of the Rupee?

It is a process of increasing rupee acceptance across the world for cross-border trading.

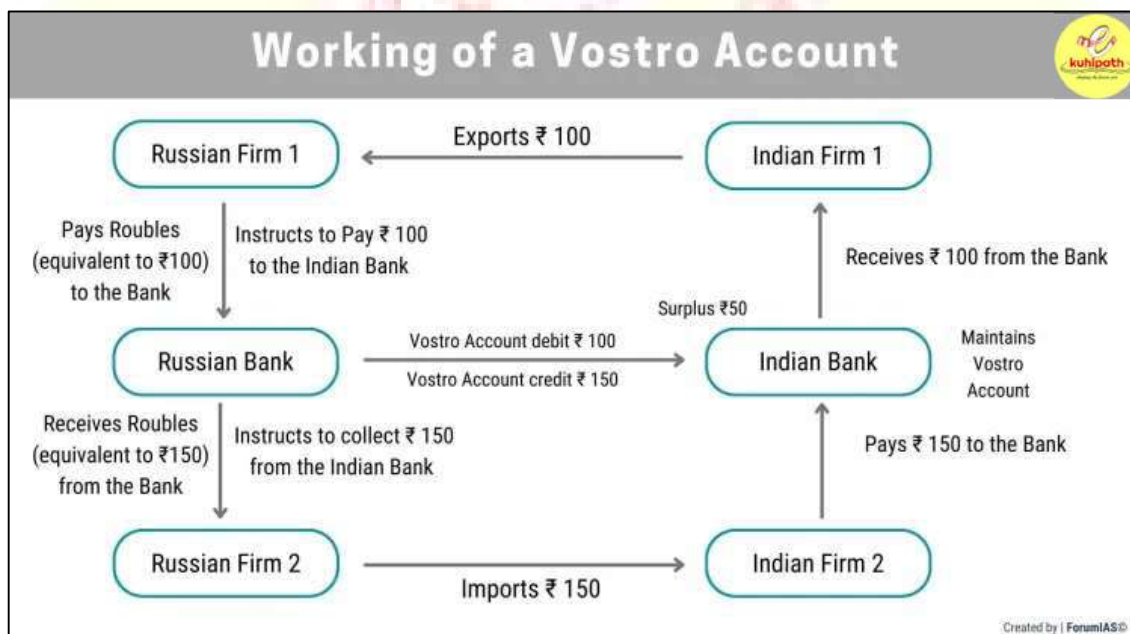
- ❖ **Benefits:** India will have to rely less on foreign currencies and holding foreign exchange reserves; Reduced Vulnerability to External Shocks and Currency Risks; Increasing bargaining power of Indian Enterprises

What is SVRA?

SVRA is an account that **domestic banks hold for foreign banks in the former's domestic currency**, the rupee, which allows domestic banks to provide international banking services to their clients who have global banking needs without having to be physically present abroad.

- ❖ RBI had issued a framework for Trade settlement in Rupee (in July 2022) through SVRA

Other initiatives for the Internationalization of Rupee are: Cross border trading in Rupee (e.g. Masala Bond); Currency swap agreements.



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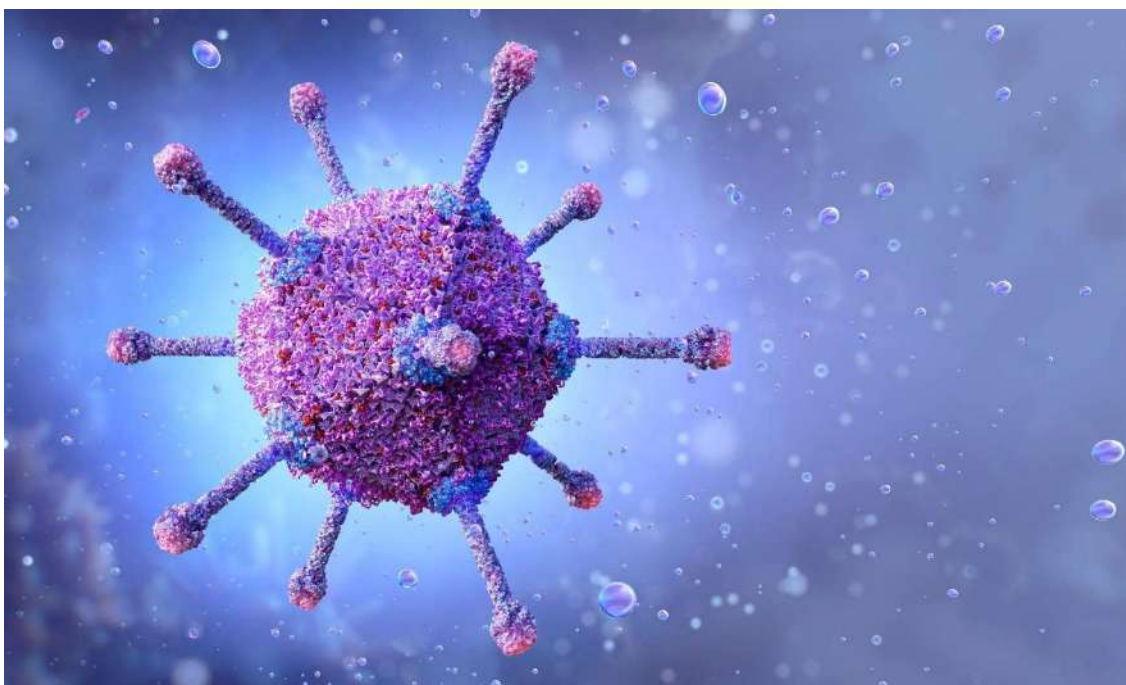


SCIENCE AND TECH

40.ADENOVIRUS

Source : Hindustan Times

News : West Bengal is in the grip of an unprecedented adenovirus outbreak.



About Adenovirus:

- ❖ **Adenoviruses** are common viruses that cause a range of illnesses. They can cause cold-like symptoms, sore throat, bronchitis, pneumonia, diarrhoea and pink eye(conjunctivitis).

When was adenovirus discovered?

- ❖ Adenoviruses are non-enveloped, double-stranded DNA viruses. They were first discovered in the human adenoid tissue in 1953 by Rowe and his colleagues.

Symptoms:

- ❖ common cold or flu-like symptoms
- ❖ fever
- ❖ sore throat
- ❖ acute bronchitis (inflammation of the airways of the lungs, sometimes called a “chest cold”)

- ❖ pneumonia (infection of the lungs)
- ❖ pink eye (conjunctivitis)
- ❖ acute gastroenteritis (inflammation of the stomach or intestines causing diarrhoea, vomiting, nausea and stomach pain)

Treatment:

- ❖ There is no specific treatment for an adenovirus infection — **the route is largely one of providing supportive care.**

41. INDIA'S FIRST DNA VACCINE FOR DENGUE

Source :Down to Earth

News : In a significant development in **DNA vaccination research, India's first and only DNA vaccine candidate for dengue has shown promising results.**



About DNA Vaccines:

- ❖ A **DNA vaccine** is a type of vaccine that uses a small piece of DNA that codes for a specific antigen (**a molecule that triggers an immune response**) from a pathogen, such as a virus or bacterium, to stimulate an immune response.
- ❖ The world's first DNA vaccine—**ZyCoV-D**, developed by **ZyduS Cadila**—was approved in 2021 for emergency **use against COVID-19**.

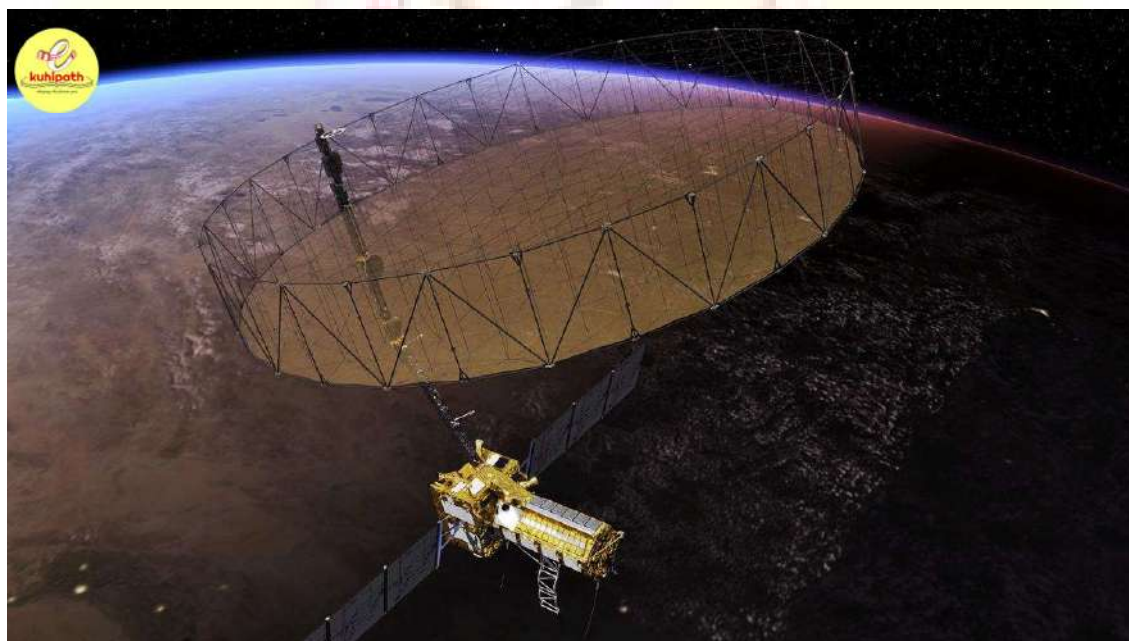
Why developing an effective DNA vaccine for dengue is tough?

- ❖ Because it is caused by **four closely related viruses—DEN-1, DEN-2, DEN-3 and DEN-4**—called serotypes.
- ❖ Each one **interacts differently with antibodies in human blood**. A person infected with DEN-1 is then protected against it for life, but not against the other three serotypes. An ideal vaccine must target all serotypes

42. NISAR SATELLITE

Source: Indian Express

News: The US Air Force handed over NISAR, an earth observation satellite **jointly developed by NASA and ISRO, to the Indian space agency**. It will be used by **ISRO for a variety of purposes like volcanic eruptions, agricultural mapping, landslide-prone areas etc.**



What is NISAR?

- ❖ The 2,800 kilograms satellite consists of both **L-band and S-band synthetic aperture radar (SAR) instruments**, which makes it a **dual-frequency imaging radar satellite**.
- ❖ While NASA has provided the **L-band radar, GPS, a high-capacity solid-state recorder to store data, and a payload data subsystem**, **ISRO has provided the S-band radar, the GSLV launch system and spacecraft**.
- ❖ Another important component of the satellite is its large **39-foot stationary antenna reflector**. Made of a gold-plated wire mesh, the reflector will be used

to focus “the radar signals emitted and received by the upward-facing feed on the instrument structure”

43. H3N2 OUTBREAK

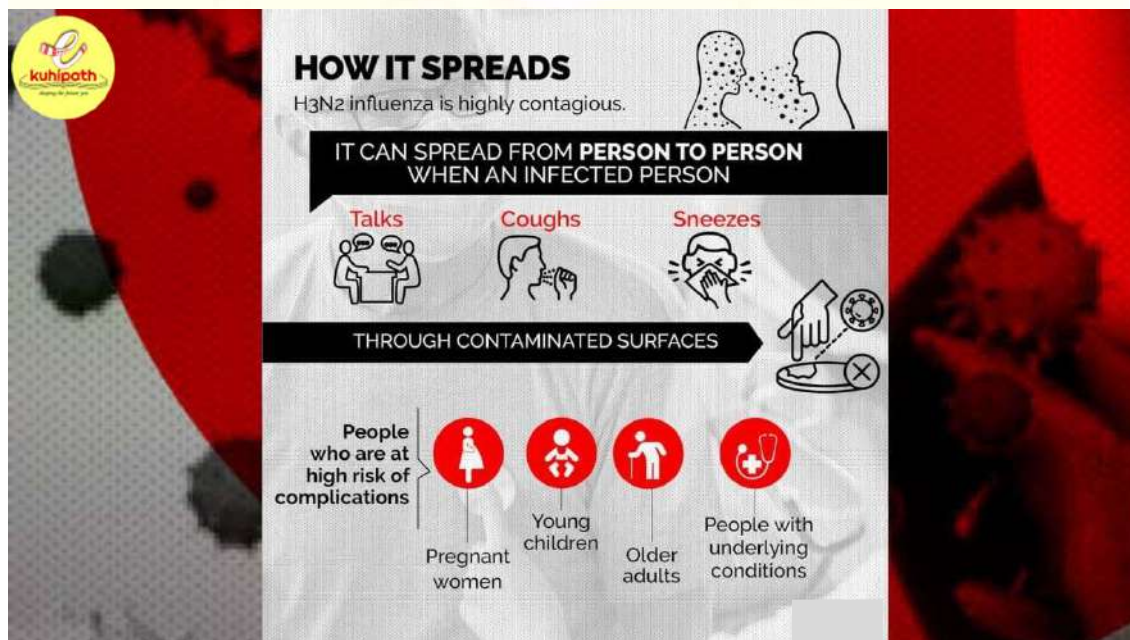
Source: Down to Earth

Context: The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) confirmed that the recent **outbreak of a respiratory illness** — with symptoms of cold, sore throat and fever accompanied by fatigue is caused by **Influenza Sub-type H3N2**.

- ❖ There are **four types of seasonal influenza viruses**, types **A, B, C and D**. Influenza A and B viruses circulate and cause seasonal epidemics of disease.

WHAT IS H3N2 VIRUS?

- ❖ H3N2 virus is a **type of influenza virus called the influenza A virus**. It is a respiratory viral infection that causes illnesses every year. **This subtype of influenza A virus was discovered in 1968 in humans**.
- ❖ The virus derives from types of protein strains of the influenza A virus – **hemagglutinin (HA) and neuraminidase (NA)**.
- ❖ HA has over **18 different subtypes**, each numbered H1 to H18 while NA has **11 different subtypes**, each numbered N1 to N11. The H3N2 is a combination of the two protein strains of the influenza A virus.



SYMPTOMS OF H3N2 VIRUS:

- The symptoms of the H3N2 virus include cough, runny nose or congested nose, sore throat, headaches, body aches, fever, chills, fatigue, diarrhoea, vomiting and breathlessness.

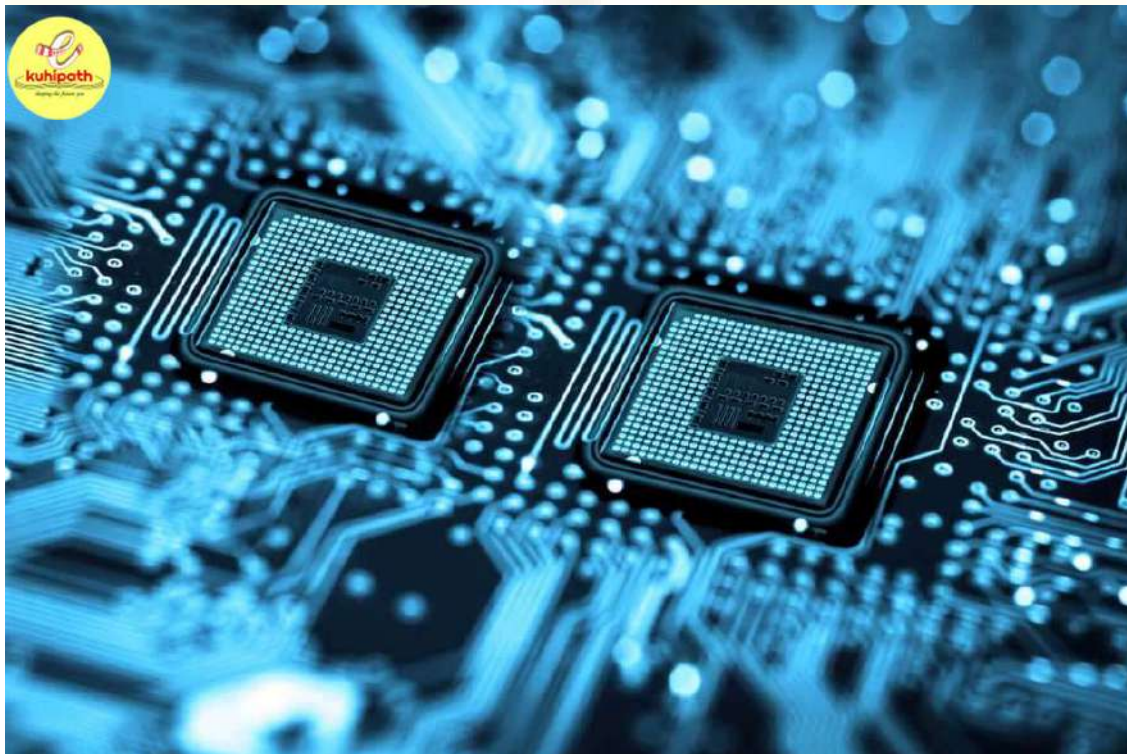
TREATMENT FOR H3N2 VIRUS:

- Regular over-the-counter medications for fever, cough or headaches can be consumed to relieve the symptoms. Annual flu shots for the influenza virus should be administered and taken around this time.

44. INDIA, U.S. TO LAUNCH A SEMICONDUCTOR SUB-COMMITTEE

Source: The Hindu

Context: A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on establishing a semiconductor supply chain and innovation partnership under the framework of India – US Commercial Dialogue was signed between the two countries.



- ❖ The MoU seeks to establish a **collaborative mechanism between the two governments on Semiconductor Supply chain resiliency and diversification in view of the US's CHIPS and Science Act and India's Semiconductor Mission.**

Benefits:

- ❖ It aims to **leverage the complementary strengths of both countries and facilitate commercial opportunities and the development of semiconductor innovation ecosystems** through discussions on various aspects of the semiconductor value chain.
- ❖ The MoU **envisages mutually beneficial R&D, talent, and skill development.**

This is part of the **U.S.-India initiative of Critical and Emerging Technology (ICET)** that will broaden the “**strategic technology partnership**”.

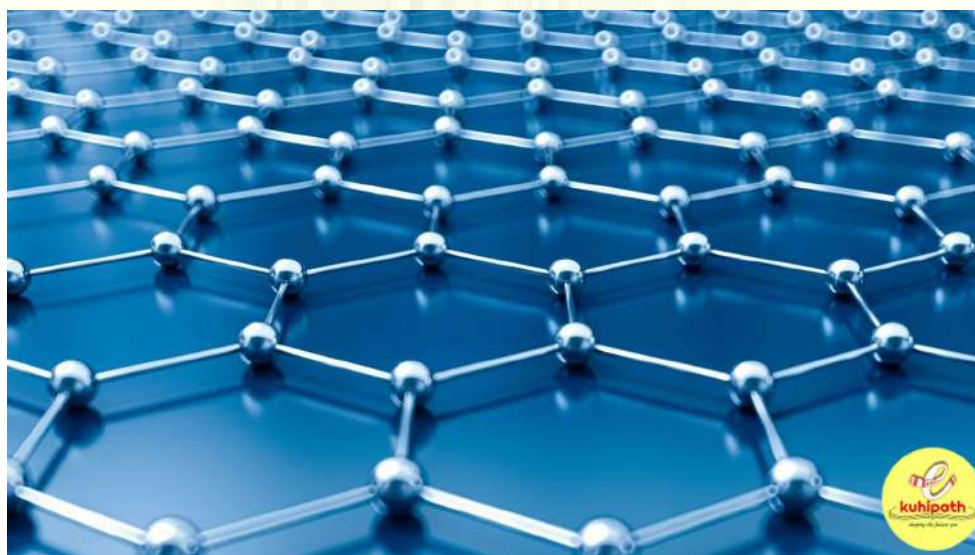
About ICET:

- ❖ It was established **to elevate and expand our strategic technology partnership and defense industrial cooperation** between the country's governments, businesses, and academic institutions.

45. “REDDMATTER”: NEW SUPERCONDUCTOR MATERIAL

Source: The Wall Street Journal

Context: A group of researchers at the University of Rochester claimed to have developed the first commercially accessible material that eliminate the loss of energy as electricity move along a wire.



About the New Superconductor Material

- ❖ **Operating range:** Can operate at room temperature (21 degrees C) and much lower pressure (10,000 atmospheric pressure) than previously discovered superconducting materials.
- ❖ **Naming:** They named the resulting material “**reddmatter**,” after observing how the material’s hue changed from blue to pink to red as it got compressed.
- ❖ **Material:** It is formed by **combining lutetium (a rare earth metal) with hydrogen and nitrogen**
- **Applications:** The new superconductor could help create lossless electrical grids, and better and cheaper magnets for use in future nuclear fusion reactors, among other things.

46.ANTIBIOTIC DRUGS ON LIVESTOCK

Source: The Hindu

Context: Researchers at the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), have found that **grazing by livestock leads to lower carbon storage in soil compared to grazing by wild herbivores.**

- ❖ Researchers found that this **difference appears to be due to the use of veterinary antibiotics such as tetracycline on livestock.**

More about the study:

- ❖ The researchers said that when released into the soil through dung and urine, **these antibiotics alter the microbial communities in the soil in ways that are detrimental to sequestering carbon.**
- ❖ The study states that although soils from the wild and livestock areas had many similarities, they differed in one key parameter called **carbon use efficiency (CUE), which determines the ability of microbes to store carbon in the soil. The soil in the livestock areas had 19% lower CUE.**

About Tetracycline:

- ❖ Antibiotics such as **tetracycline are long-lived and can linger in the soil for decades.**
- ❖ Its use in **cats, dogs, small mammals, horses, or birds to treat bacterial infections or other conditions is ‘off label’ or ‘extra label’.**



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ENVIRONMENT

47.CULTURAL BURNS

Source: Down to Earth

News: As per the new research, **traditional fire burning practices or ‘cultural burns’ by indigenous Australians** can help protect the iconic koala.

- ❖ The cultural burns were **cooler, lower, and slower than hot fires**, encouraging the regeneration of suitable native plants while **controlling other species (like banksias and wattle)** to reduce the risk of fire reaching the canopy where **koalas** lived.
- ❖ **The United Nations** has noted that **traditional knowledge of land management**, including the use of fire to manage fuel, can be an **effective way of reducing wildfire hazards** and ensuring that biodiversity and cultural and ecological values are respected.



About Koala:

- ❖ They are **arboreal herbivorous marsupial native** to Australia. The koala is one of 110 priority species that the Australian government aims to save from extinction over the next 10 years.
- ❖ **Usage:** It can be used to show the importance of traditional knowledge in environmental conservation as well as the way to mitigate the risk of forest fires.



48.PHYTOPLANKTON BLOOMS

Source: The Hindu

Context: Huge blooms of **phytoplankton** — microscopic algae floating on the ocean's surface — have become larger and more frequent along the world's coastlines.



- ❖ Marine animals such as **fish and whales** eat phytoplankton

- ❖ It can be toxic in large amounts, starving the ocean of oxygen and leading to “dead zones” that wreak chaos on the food chain and fisheries.

Reason for increase in phytoplankton blooms:

- ❖ Warmer sea surface temperatures appear to be behind the boom.
- ❖ Changes in climate can also mess with ocean circulation, affecting the mixing between ocean layers and how nutrients move around the ocean.
- ❖ Human development also plays a role. Fertilizer runoff from agriculture can spike nutrient loads in the ocean, leading to blooms.

49. JERDON'S NARROW-MOUTHED FROG (UPERODON MONTANUS)

Source: DTE

Context: The Jerdon's narrow-mouthed frog, a **montane species found in the Western Ghats**, has been rediscovered after 89 years by a group of zoologists.

- ❖ IUCN: 'Near Threatened', but researchers are campaigning for it to be classified as 'Endangered.'



About Frogs:

Frogs (amphibians) are both **predators and prey** in many ecosystems. They help control insect populations and are also **indicator species**, meaning their presence or absence can indicate the

overall health of an ecosystem. In India, **380 species of frogs** and toads have been recorded to date.

About Western Ghats:

The Western Ghats are mountain ranges spanning six Indian states. It is a hotspot of biodiversity, with **high levels of endemism and evergreen forests**. It is also known as the **Great Escarpment of India** and is a **UNESCO World Heritage Site**.

50. INTERNATIONAL BIG CAT ALLIANCE (IBCA)

Source: Indian Express

Context: India has proposed to launch a mega global alliance under its leadership to protect big cats and assured support over five years with **guaranteed funding of \$100 million**

- ❖ **IBCA Aim:** Protection and conservation of the **seven major big cats** — **tiger, lion, leopard, snow leopard, puma, jaguar and cheetah**.



International big cat alliance

- **Member countries :** 97 range countries and other interested nations and organs.
- **Activities:** Advocacy, partnerships, knowledge portal, capacity building, eco-tourism, expert groups and finance tapping.
- **Governance structure :** General Assembly, Council and Secretariat .
- **Funding:** \$100 million grant assistance by India for the first 5 years; later through membership fees, contributions from bilateral and multilateral institutions, and the private sector.

- **Previous initiatives :** India had in 2019 called for an Alliance of Global Leaders to curb poaching and illegal wildlife trade in Asia.
- **Importance of saving tiger:** India is only country in the world to have 5 big cats in wild (all except pumas and jaguars). Big cats are umbrella and flagships species whose loss can set off a “trophic cascade”, (prey populations may explode, resulting in overgrazing and degrading the health of the landscape). India is home to 75% of global tigers.

51. FOREST FIRES IN INDIA

News: Forest fires continued to remain unabated in Odisha after the state recorded 542 such cases in the last seven days making it the highest among all states in the country.

Causes of a Forest fire:

Natural	Man-made
Lightening	When a fire source, such as a naked flame, cigarette, or bidi, comes into contact with an ignitable material
Low humidity/Dryness	
High atmospheric temperature	



Types of a forest fire:

- ❖ Surface fire
- ❖ Ground fire

❖ Crown fire

WHY FORESTS NEED WILDFIRES

- ❖ Wildfires stimulate new growth
- ❖ Helps in the evolution of forests
- ❖ Landscape/disease management
- ❖ Promotes biodiversity
- ❖ Fire prevents fire
- ❖ Controls the growth of invasive species

52.EURASIAN OTTERS

Source: The Hindu

News: Scientists from the University of Jammu's Institute of Mountain Environment have camera trapped three Eurasian otters in the Neeru stream of the Chenab catchment in Jammu and Kashmir.

Eurasian otters

- It is an elusive, solitary other species that is found in parts of three continents – Europe, Asia and Africa.
- Range in India: Northern, Northeast and southern India (mostly in cold hills and mountain streams)
- IUCN: Near threatened
- CITES: Appendix I
- Indian wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule II



53. LONG-TAILED AND SMEW DUCKS

Source: The print

Context: Long-tailed Ducks were seen in **Kashmir** after **84 years** and were last seen at Hokersar.

- ❖ **Smew Duck species spotted in Kashmir after 116 years.**

About Long-Tailed Ducks

- ❖ Long-tailed ducks are **slim, colourful sea ducks with long tails**. That occurs around the **Arctic and Antarctic**.
- ❖ Prefer to spend winter **near major bodies of water**.
- ❖ Diet: **Marine invertebrates like crabs & molluscs**.
- ❖ **IUCN Status: Vulnerable.**



About Smew Duck:

- ❖ They are among the **most migratory birds, with arrivals at breeding grounds beginning in April**.



- ❖ Inhabit freshwater lakes, reservoirs, flooded woods, ice-free rivers, sheltered bays, estuaries, lagoons and tidal creeks.
- ❖ Location: Found in both Eurasia and Europe. They rarely visit different parts of the Indian subcontinent.

IUCN Status: Least Concern.



54. CONSERVATION PLAN FOR GREAT INDIAN BUSTARDS

Source: PIB

Context: Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change has taken various measures for the Conservation and protection of Great Indian Bustards



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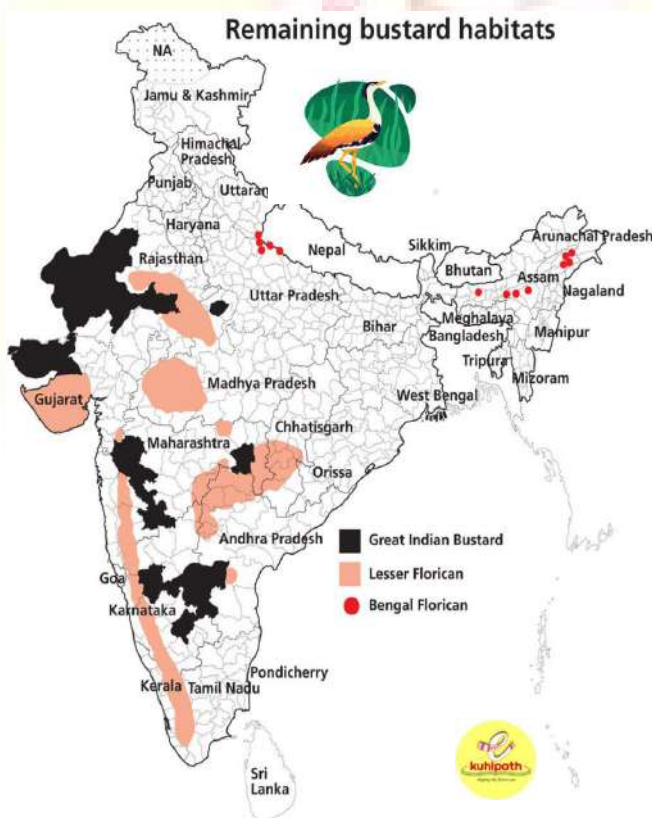
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- ❖ **Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Species Recovery** under the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats
- ❖ **Conservation Breeding:** E.g., Desert National Park at Jaisalmer
- ❖ **Establishment of a Satellite conservation breeding Facility** at Sam, Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.
- ❖ **In-situ Conservation Proposal** by Rajasthan government
- ❖ **Consideration of funding support** from State plan and/or State CAMPA funds.
- ❖ **Project Great Indian Bustard**
- ❖ **National Bustard Recovery Plans**



- The **State bird of Rajasthan**, is considered **India's most critically endangered bird**
- Its population is confined mostly to **Rajasthan and Gujarat**. Small populations occur in **Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh**.
- **Protection Status:**
- **International Union for Conservation of Nature Red List (IUCN):** Critically Endangered
- **Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES):** Appendix I
- **Convention on Migratory Species (CMS):** Appendix I
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** Schedule I



NORTH-EAST

55.NAGALAND GETS ITS FIRST WOMEN MLA's

News: Hekani Jakhalu and Salhoutuonuo Kruse of the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party get berths in the 60-member State Assembly with wins from Dimapur-III and Western Angami.



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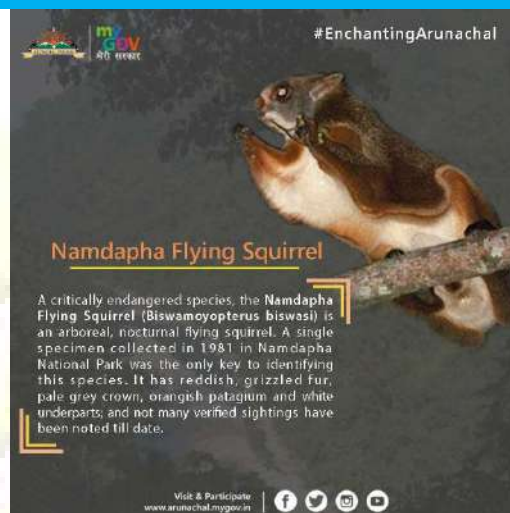
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56. NAMDAPHA NATIONAL PARK AND TIGER RESERVE

Source: The Hindu

News: A rare sighting of a tiger in India's Namdapha National Park and Tiger Reserve led to officials to uncover several timber depots in the core area of the reserve



- ❖ Hoolock Gibbons (the only 'ape' species found in India)
- ❖ Hoolock Gibbon: IUCN: Endangered

NAMDAPHA NATIONAL PARK

- ❖ Established in 1983.
- ❖ Area : Nearly 2000 sq km.
- ❖ Arunachal Pradesh (in the biodiversity Hotspot in the eastern Himalayas).
- ❖ Name: From a river originating in the park and it meets Noa-Dehing river (Tributary of the Brahmaputra).
- ❖ Lies Between the Dapha bum range of the Mishimi Hills and Patkai Range.
- ❖ Only Park in the world to have the four Felling species : Tiger, Leopard, Snow Leopard and Clouded Leopard.

Previous Year Question

1. Which one of the following National Parks has a climate that varies from tropical to subtropical, temperate and arctic? (UPSC 2015)

- (a) Khangchendzonga National Park
- (b) Nandadevi National Park
- (c) Neora Valley National Park
- (d) Namdapha National Park

Ans: D



2. Consider the following pairs: (UPSC 2013)

1. Nokrek Biosphere Reserve: Garo Hills
2. Loktak (Loktak) Lake: Barail Range
3. Namdapha National Park: Dafla Hills

Which of the above pairs is/are correctly matched?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3
- (d) None

Ans: A

57. SILSAKO TO BE THE LARGEST LAKE IN GUWAHATI: CM HIMANTA BISWA SARMA

Source: The Sentinel

News: CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, posted a message on his Twitter account saying, "A stunning model of the projected Silsako lake has been designed, and it would contribute to the scenic grandeur and ease the perennial artificial flooding in Guwahati."



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58. BIHU: WORLD RECORD

News: Assam created history and marked its entry in the Guinness Book of World Records on Thursday, with more than 11000 dancers and drummers performing 'Bihu' dance and playing 'dhol' in a single venue.



- ❖ During the event, the performers included singers, along with those playing the state's traditional instruments, such as Taal, Dhol, Gogona, Pepa, Toka, and Xutuli, and more.
- ❖ To make this event a huge hit, practice sessions were held across the state to bring in the best performers, and with the aim to put Assam's cultural heritage on the world map.
- ❖ All the participants, including the master trainers and dancers, will be receiving a grant of INR 25,000 for participating in the historic event.
- ❖ Earlier, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma stated that the aim is to organise the largest Bihu dance performance at a single venue and make it to the Guinness Book of World Records in the folk-dance category.



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59. GI TAG FOR GAMOSA

News: The Assam CM also received a Geographical Indication (GI) registration certificate for *Gamosa* (Assamese scarf) from Controller General of Patent, Designs and Trademarks and Registrar of GI Registry Unnat P Pandit. Gamosa received the GI tag from the central government in December 2022.



60. JADAV PAYENG SUGGESTD GLOBAL LOCKDOWN

News: Padma Shri awardee environmentalist Jadav Payeng has requested the global leaders to call for a week-long lockdown across the world to strike a balance in the eco-system.



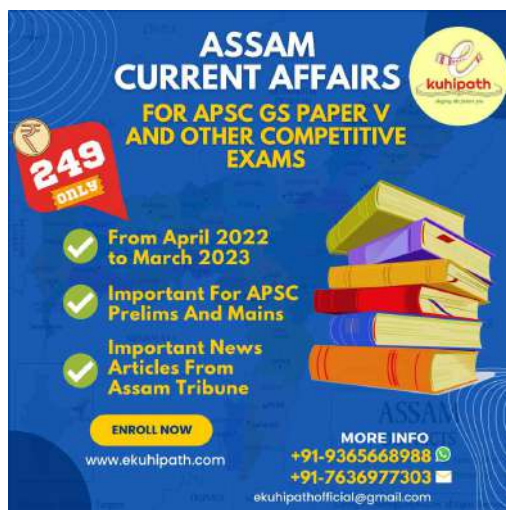
Jadav "Molai" Payeng (born 31 October 1959)

- ❖ He is an environmental activist and forestry worker from Majuli, popularly known as the Forest Man of India.
- ❖ Over the course of several decades, he has planted and tended trees on a sandbar of the river Brahmaputra turning it into a forest reserve.
- ❖ The forest, called Molai forest after him, is located near Kokilamukh of Jorhat, Assam, India and encompasses an area of about 1,360 acres / 550 hectares.
- ❖ In 2015, he was honoured with Padma Shri, the fourth highest civilian award in India. He was born in the indigenous Mising tribe of Assam.

61. CIVILIAN AWARDS OF ASSAM



- ❖ The list of winners of the Highest Civilian Awards awarded by the Assam Government for the year 2023 has been released on Wednesday. There will be one recipient for the Assam Baibhav, five recipients for the Assam Saurav and fifteen recipients for the Assam Gaurav awards respectively. Dr Tapan Saikia has been declared the Assam Baibhav for the year 2023. He is associated with the Healthcare (Cancer Care) & Public Services sectors. Currently a resident of Powai in the capital of Maharashtra, he hails from the Naharkatia region of Dibrugarh in Assam.
- ❖ Krishna Roy, the producer of Abahan Theater is one of the recipients of the Assam Saurav for working in the field of Art & Culture (Mobile Theatre). He hails from the Pathshala region of the Bajali district. Gilbert Sangma is the next recipient of Assam Saurav for his contributions to football. Nayanmoni Saikia will also receive the same award for her contributions to the lawn bowl game. Dr Binoy Kumar Saikia, the principal scientist of NEIST will receive the award for his contributions to science. Dr Sashidhar Phukan, the Joint Director of Health Services in Jorhat has been named Assam Saurav for the field of Healthcare and Public Service.
- ❖ Dhritimala Deka will receive Assam Gaurav for Public Service and Debajit Barman for Agriculture & Allied (Composite Farming) fields. Rustom Basumatary and Manje La will get the same award for the tourism sector. Binanda Hatibaruah will get the Assam Gaurav for the environment and forest category. Atul Ch Baruah for social work, Kalyani Rajbonshi for entrepreneurship (SHG Worker), Shila Gowala for public service (ASHA Worker) will also be awarded.
- ❖ Jogesh Deuri will be awarded for his work in agriculture & allied (Sericulture) field, Pankaj Lal Gogoi for entrepreneurship (Poultry), Sarbeswar Basumatary for agriculture (Progressive Farmer), Manthang Hmar for agriculture and allied (Pineapple Farmer & Exporter) and Dr Dhrubajyoti Sharma in agriculture and allied (Horticulturist & Entrepreneur) have also been declared winners of this award. The last two winners of Assam Gaurav are Dayal Goswami for Satriya Culture & Art (Mukha Shilpa) and Dr Syed Ifthikar Ahmed for Anti-AIDS and Anti-Drugs campaigns.



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NATIONAL NEWS

- ❖ International Yoga Festival 2023 in Rishikesh.
- ❖ President Murmu to launch 'Catch the Rain-2023' campaign.
- ❖ 'World's first' bamboo crash barrier installed on Maharashtra highway.
- ❖ SC formed five-member expert committee to look into Hindenburg report; headed by Former SC judge Abhay Manohar Sapre.
- ❖ Amit Shah inaugurated Phase I of Bengaluru Safe City project.
- ❖ Maunanj became the 53rd district of Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ Madhya Pradesh government launched Ladli Bahna scheme for women.
- ❖ 7th International Dharma Dhamma Conference in Bhopal.
- ❖ No sale of gold jewellery without hallmark unique identification number (HUID) from April 2023.
- ❖ First meeting of Central Asia JW Group on Afghanistan held in India.
- ❖ Yaoshang festival begins in Manipur.
- ❖ ECI host the 3rd International Conference on 'Election Integrity'.
- ❖ Odisha CM unveiled Dakota aircraft for public viewing in Bhubaneswar.
- ❖ Maharashtra to introduce 4th women's policy.
- ❖ J & K government launched plantation drive on International Women's Day.
- ❖ Army installed tallest Iconic National Flag in hilly Doda district, J&K.
- ❖ Pune hosted the fourth Y20 Consultation Meeting.
- ❖ West Bengal urged Centre to allow poppy cultivation.
- ❖ Centre launched portal for women scientists for research grants & fund.
- ❖ MoHUA launched 1st Edition of Women Icons Leading Swacchata Awards.
- ❖ Amit Shah virtually inaugurated development project in Ahmedabad.
- ❖ New health programme 'Arogya Mahila' launched for women in Telangana.
- ❖ Piyush Goyal chaired the 6th meeting of National Startup Advisory Council (NSAC) in New Delhi..
- ❖ New initiative called 'Beggar Free City' launched in Maharashtra's Nagpur.
- ❖ IRCTC to start 'Bharat Nepal Ashtha Yatra Tour'.
- ❖ Nitin Gadkari unveiled first methanol run buses in Bengaluru.



- ❖ Two-day G20 flower festival begins in New Delhi.
- ❖ PM Modi unveils world's longest railway platform in Hubballi Dharwad Literacy rate in India: Bihar lowest at 8%, Kerala highest at 94%.
- ❖ Meghalaya International Film Festival begins in Shillong.
- ❖ Narender Singh Tomar inaugurated "AgriUnifest" in Bengaluru.
- ❖ Atal Innovation Mission launched ATL Sarthi.
- ❖ Sampanna Ramesh becomes fastest Indian to swim across Palk Strait.
- ❖ Rajasthan CM announced 19 new districts and three new divisions.
- ❖ Manipur governor inaugurated Int'l Conference on 'Natural Farming'.
- ❖ PM Modi inaugurated the Global Millets Conference.
- ❖ Uttarakhand government approved 10 % reservation for statehood activists.
- ❖ President Murmu presents the 'President's Colour' to INS Dronacharya.
- ❖ Sikkim hosts B20 meeting under India's G20 presidency.
- ❖ India approves Rs 70,500 crore for acquisition of military hardware.
- ❖ Ayush Ministry inaugurated 26th session of Rashtriya Ayurveda Vidyapeeth.
- ❖ Indian Railways to become Net Zero Carbon Emitter by 2030.
- ❖ Government to develop mega textile parks in 7 states under PM MITRA scheme.
- ❖ India Post partnered with Shiprocket to benefit Startups and MSMEs.
- ❖ Indira Gandhi Airport ranked best airport in South Asia for 5th time.
- ❖ India & Sri Lanka inaugurate exhibition 'Geoffrey Bawa' in New Delhi.
- ❖ Union government announced 10% reservation in CISF for former Agniveers.
- ❖ International SME Convention 2023 held in New Delhi.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

- ❖ After Singapore India's UPI likely to extend to UAE, Mauritius, Indonesia.
- ❖ Bola Tinubu elected as the new President of Nigeria.
- ❖ Vietnam parliament elects Vo Van Thuong as new President.
- ❖ Electoral Democracy Index 2023: India ranked 108; topped by Denmark.
- ❖ Delhi ranks 4th on list of world's most polluted cities; Lahore at first place.
- ❖ Global Terrorism Index – India ranked 13th, topped by Afghanistan.
- ❖ World Happiness Index 2023: India ranked 125; topped by Finland



❖ TIME list of World's Greatest

Places of 2023 released; Ladakh and Mayurbhanj are among chosen destinations.

❖ Microsoft introduces 'Bing Image Creator' powered by OpenAI's DALL-E.

BANKING AND FINANCIAL NEWS

- ❖ Moody's raises GDP growth forecast for India to 5.5% in 2023.
- ❖ Singapore Airlines to get 25.1% stake in enlarged Air India group.
- ❖ India's February GST collections rises 12% YoY to Rs 1.50 lakh cr.
- ❖ IRCTC partners with HDFC Bank to launch India's most rewarding co-branded travel credit card.
- ❖ Axis Bank completes deal to buy Citibank's India consumer business.
- ❖ SBI announces completion of \$1 billion Syndicated Social Loan Facility.
- ❖ RBI puts restrictions on Musiri Urban Co-operative Bank.
- ❖ World Bank commits \$1 billion to India for public healthcare infra.
- ❖ RBI launched Mission 'Har Payment Digital' to promote digital payments.
- ❖ India signed loan agreement with World Bank for Green NH Corridors project.
- ❖ National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) approved HDFC, HDFC Bank merger.
- ❖ Indian economy likely to grow 6% in FY24: Crisil.
- ❖ ICICI Prudential Life Insurance launched 'ICICI Pru Gold'.
- ❖ Indian economy to grow at 7%; inflation set to moderate: FM.
- ❖ RBI to set up Data Centre & Cybersecurity Training Institute in Bhubaneswar.
- ❖ Income tax dept launched mobile app 'AIS for Taxpayer'.
- ❖ Amazon Pay ties up with NPCI's Bharat BillPay for loan repayments.

SPORTS

- ❖ Asian Kho Kho Championship for Men and Women begins in Assam.
- ❖ Rohan Bopanna becomes oldest tennis player to win ATP Masters.
- ❖ Sergio Perez won the Saudi Arabian Grand Prix 2023.
- ❖ India to host 2023 SAFF Championships in Bengaluru.
- ❖ ISSF Shooting World Cup begins in Bhopal.
- ❖ China & South Korea bag titles at All England Open.
- ❖ Hima Das, Ancy Sojan win gold in 200m and long jump in IGP.
- ❖ Sarabjot Singh won gold in 10m air pistol at ISSF World Cup.



- ❖ Khelo India Dus ka Dum tournament to be organized to celebrate International Women's Day 2023.
- ❖ Australia's Shaun Marsh announced retirement from first-class cricket.
- ❖ Virat Kohli becomes 2nd-highest run scorer against Australia.
- ❖ Prithviraj Tondaiman won bronze in trap shooting in Doha.
- ❖ Ashleigh Gardner & Harry Brook won ICC Player of the Month for February.

SAMPLE MAINS ANSWER

Q. As QUAD members strive to preserve the independence and accessibility of the Indo-Pacific region, there are worries that threaten the organization's goals. Discuss

ANSWER:

Introduction: The US, Japan, India, and Australia have a strategic alliance known as the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or QUAD. It was established to address regional security challenges and support the expansion of the Indo-Pacific region's economy. It is significant because it has the potential to balance China's rising dominance and promote greater freedom and openness in the Indo-Pacific region.

Body : QUAD members strive to preserve the independence and accessibility of the Indo-Pacific area:

- ❖ **Enhancing Maritime Security:** QUAD members aim to improve maritime security through joint patrols, capacity building, and surveillance operations in the Indo-Pacific region.
- ❖ **Promoting Free and Open Trade:** QUAD members support free and open trade to ensure economic growth and stability in the region.
- ❖ **Strengthening Bilateral and Multilateral Ties:** QUAD members seek to strengthen bilateral and multilateral ties with regional countries to promote peace, stability, and prosperity. In 2021, India hosted the QUAD summit, where the leaders discussed ways to deepen cooperation with ASEAN countries.
- ❖ **Supporting Infrastructure Development:** QUAD members promote quality infrastructure development in the Indo-Pacific region to enhance connectivity, trade, and economic growth to ensure accessibility to the benefits of financial cooperation.
- ❖ **Freedom of Navigation:** Members of QUAD want to make sure that ships and planes can move freely in the Indo-Pacific region for continued access to the sea for multiple purposes.

- ❖ **Countering Terrorism:** Recently, a Quad Working Group on Counter-Terrorism has been announced to counter new and emerging forms of terrorism, radicalization, and violent extremism.

Conclusion: Despite concerns, the quad has huge potential as a group due to several reasons. It can help preserve peace, stability, and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific region. It may also promote democratic ideals in addition to promoting democratic principles, ensuring a rules-based system, and countering China's aggressiveness. It can also help economies grow, improve connections, and make it easier for member countries to work together on technical issues.

Additional info: Worries that threaten QUAD's goals:

- ❖ **Divergent Interests:** The four-member countries have different strategic interests that may not always align. For example, India's perception of the Indo-Pacific differs from that of the USA.
- ❖ **Economic Dependence on China:** Many countries in the region are economically dependent on China, which makes it challenging to balance the financial and strategic aspects. Australia's decision to join the QUAD drew criticism from China, which led to economic retaliation against Australian goods.
- ❖ **China's Influence in the Region:** China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific threatens the Quad's goals.
- ❖ **Regional Tensions:** Ongoing tensions in the region, such as the North Korean nuclear threat, territorial disputes in the South China Sea, and India-Pakistan tensions, can divert attention from the QUAD's objectives. In 2020, India and China engaged in a violent border clash, further heightened regional tensions.
- ❖ **Political Instability:** Political instability in some of the QUAD countries can hinder progress and the implementation of the group's policies.
- ❖ **Diplomatic Challenges:** Diplomatic challenges may arise due to differences in cultural and political values and diplomatic relations with non-QUAD countries.
- ❖ **Public Perception:** The Quad faces criticism from countries like China, which view the group as a threat to their interests. Example: In 2018, China's foreign minister warned against the formation of the QUAD, citing concerns about a potential "Asian NATO."



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