MOST IMPORTANT TOPICS OF **JUNE 2024**

CLAT EXPRESS

MONTHLY **GK** MAGAZINE FOR **LAW ENTRANCES** BY LAW PREP TUTORIAL

VOTE

18th LOK SABHA ELECTIONS

- ◆ Controversy Surrounding NEET UG 2024 Examinations
- ◆ 50th Group of Seven (G7) Summit
- ◆ RBI Surplus Transfer to Government
- ◆ RBI's Gold Reserve

IMPORTANT
TOPICS of JUNE 2024
CONTENTS

LAW PREP Tutorial

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Important **Note** for the Readers
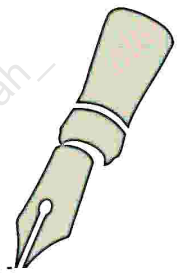
How to use the magazine

The magazine consists of topics that hold relevance and importance in relation to CLAT. Each topic has following parts:

1. **News:** This section ensures that the readers know what part of the topic has made it to the headlines of a newspaper

2. **Explained:** This section helps the reader to know the context of the topic. Explanation that will help the reader understand about the topic is the motive of this section of the magazine. Before cramming the facts and details about the topic it is essential that you understand the topic. A little detail has never hurt anybody.

3. **Way to marks:** This section of the topic is your gateway to marks that will help you fetch selection in the CLAT. You memorize the points in such a way that they are backed by the understanding of each, and every word written in this section. You can always investigate the internet or take help from teacher for the points you do not understand. Blind rote-learning of the points is not advisable for an unpredictable exam such as CLAT.

4. **Pepper it with:** This section contains those topics which are related to the main topic discussed throughout the page. A little information on the periphery helps you answer those questions that are not part of the daily news but have crawled into the exam paper to fetch you another mark. Topics that are on the side of the main news have often helped in gaining that last mark which eventually puts you into the final selection list of the CLAT.

5. **Practice Questions:** This section has a set of questions to help you gauge your understanding of the topic. You should try and solve the questions once you have thoroughly done the topic. On some days, start with the questions to test yourself for that one situation in the CLAT when you know nothing about the topic, but you will have to guess the answers. On a side note, some questions might come across to you as a surprise but then when has the CLAT main exam not thrown us off our seats!

Happy Learning!

Naga Insurgency

Why in News?

National Investigation Agency (NIA) filed a charge sheet in a Guwahati Court, accusing "China – Myanmar Module" of National Socialist Council of Nagaland – Isak Muivah (NSCN – IM) of Supporting Cadres of 2 Banned Meitei Outfits to infiltrate India.

Explained:

Areas in the north east is having a long history of separatist which want a different state or different nation. This situation has been seen mostly in case of Nagaland where there are two major groups of Insurgents i.e. National Socialist Council of Nagaland – Isak Muivah and the other being National Socialist Council of Nagaland – Khaplang. These groups which wants a different nation out of India are getting help from countries like China. With the help of Chinies funding they are getting powerful also the support from the separatist of Myanmar adds to the above issue by helping the Nagaland Separatist.

The Above situation and separatists are now helping the other such violent movements in the area like the situation of Manipur. In Manipur the situation is that the Mieties and Naga tribes are enemy tribes and fighting between them is going on in that area. In order to increase the felling of separatist in the area the Groups in Nagaland are trying to fund the Meities so as to increase the violence in the areas of Manipur.

Way to Marks -

NIA alleges that NSCN – IM's Actions were aimed at exploiting Ethnic Unrest in Manipur, destabilising the State and Waging War against Indian Government.

History of Nagas

- Nagas came under Foreign Rule for 1st Time when British occupied their land in 19th Century.
  - Nagas assisted British Forces during World War II.

- Naga National Council (NNC) was founded in 1946 and signed a 9 – Point Agreement with Assam Governor, granting Nagas control over their territory.
  - Naga's Independence was declared on 14th August 1947.

- In 1950s, NNC took up Arms and resorted to violence over Naga's Sovereignty.
  - NNC formed underground Naga Federal Government (NFG) and its military wing, Naga Federal Army (NFA), in 1952
  - Following Shillong Accord (1975), NNC split into NSCN, which further split into NSCN (IM) and NSCN (Khaplang) in 1988.

Naga's Demand of Greater Nagalim

- Seeking Greater Nagalim, which involves Redrawing Boundaries to Unite All Naga-inhabited Areas in North-East under One Administrative Jurisdiction, ultimately aiming for Sovereign Statehood.

  o Includes various parts of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Assam and Myanmar as well.

- Demand also includes separate Naga Yezabo (Constitution) and Naga National Flag.

> *Nagas*
> - *Indigenous Community residing in North – Eastern Part of India and Neighbouring Areas of Myanmar.*
> - *Indo – Mongoloids who migrated to India around 10th century BC.*

Peace Initiatives

- Shillong Accord (1975): NNC leadership agree to Disarm.

- Ceasefire Agreement (1997): NSCN – IM signed a Ceasefire Agreement with Government to Stop Attacks on Indian Armed Forces.

- Framework Agreement with NSCN – IM (2015): Government of India recognised Unique History, Culture & Position of Nagas and their Sentiments and Aspirations.

Status of Conflicts in Nagaland and Manipur

- There are 16 Districts in Manipur, but the State is commonly thought of as divided into "Valley" and "Hill" Districts

  o Valley Region is mostly dominated by Meitei Community.

  o Manipur Valley is home to 15 Naga Tribes and Chin – Kuki – Mizo – Zomi Group

- Kangleipak Kingdom of Manipur, a British Protectorate, was raided by Naga Tribes from Northern Hills.

  o British Political Agent brought Kuki – Zomi from Kuki – Chin Hills of Burma to protect Valley from plunder by acting as a Buffer between Meiteis and Nagas.

  o Kukis, Fierce Headhunting Warriors like the Nagas, were given Land along ridges to act as a Shield for Imphal Valley Below.

- Hill Communities (Naga & Kuki) and Meiteis (Valley) have had Ethnic Tensions.

  o Naga Movement for Independence in 1950s triggered Insurgencies among Meiteis and Kuki – Zomi.

  o Kuki – Zomi Groups militarised in 1990s to demand a State within India called "Kukiland" (State within India).

  o Whereas Meiteis are seeking to restore their Tribal Status, as recognized before Manipur's 1949 Merger with India.

Reason For Recent Conflict

- **Issues in Delimitation Process**: In 2020, during 1st Delimitation Process in State since 1973, Meitei Community claimed that Census Figures used were Inaccurate, while Tribal Groups (Kuki and Nagas) argued they were Under – Represented in Assembly despite constituting 40% of Population.

- **Intrusion of Migrants from Neighbour Area**: Feb 2021 Coup in Myanmar has triggered a Refugee Crisis in India's North – East, with Meitei Leaders claiming a sudden increase of migrants in villages in Churachandpur District.

- **Trigger For Violence**: Initial Violent Protest arose from Eviction of a Kuki Village, with 38 Villages in Churachandpur – Khoupum Protected Forest Area termed as "illegal settlements," allegedly violating Article 371C.

> *People's Liberation Army*
>
> - *Formed in 1978*
> - *Led By: MM Ngouba*
> - *One of 8 Meitei Insurgent Groups that have been banned by Ministry of Home Affairs for "Advocating Secession of Manipur from India through Armed Struggle."*

> *Lokur Committee (1965)*
>
> - *Set up to look into criteria for defining Schedule Tribes.*
> - *Recommended 5 Criteria for Identification: Primitive Traits, Distinct Culture, Geographical Isolation, Shyness of Contact with Community at Large, Backwardness.*
>
> *Bhuria Commission (2002 – 2004)*
>
> - *Focused on a wide range of issues from 5th Schedule to Tribal Land and Forests, Health and Education, Working of Panchayats and Status of Tribal Women.*
>
> *High-Level Committee 2013*
>
> - *To study 5 Critical Issues related to Tribal Communities: Livelihood and Employment, Education, Health, Involuntary Displacement and Migration, Legal and Constitutional Matters.*
> - *Chairman: Prof Virginius Xaxa*

Pepper it With

- Manipur Violence , Surrender of Separatist groups in North east recently.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. When did the Nagas first come under foreign rule?
   (a) 18th century   (b) 19th century   (c) 20th century   (d) 21st century

2. In which year was the Naga National Council (NNC) founded?
   (a) 1945   (b) 1946   (c) 1947   (d) 1948

3. When was Naga independence declared?
   (a) 14th August 1947   (b) 15th August 1947   (c) 26th January 1950   (d) 1st May 1952

4. Which accord led to the split of NNC into NSCN?
   (a) Shillong Accord   (b) Framework Agreement
   (c) Ceasefire Agreement   (d) Nine-Point Agreement

5. What does the concept of "Greater Nagalim" involve?
   (a) Economic independence
   (b) Cultural autonomy
   (c) Redrawing boundaries to unite Naga-inhabited areas
   (d) Religious freedom

6. In which year was the Ceasefire Agreement signed with NSCN-IM?
   (a) 1975   (b) 1988   (c) 1997   (d) 2015

7. How many districts are there in Manipur?
   (a) 12   (b) 14   (c) 16   (d) 18

8. Which community predominantly inhabits the Manipur Valley?
   (a) Naga   (b) Kuki   (c) Meitei   (d) Zomi

9. Who brought the Kuki-Zomi from Burma to protect the Manipur Valley?
   (a) Naga tribes   (b) British Political Agent
   (c) Meitei leaders   (d) Kangleipak Kingdom

10. What are the Kuki-Zomi groups demanding?
    (a) Independence from India   (b) A state within India called "Kukiland"
    (c) Merger with Myanmar   (d) Autonomous district status

11. When was the last delimitation process in Manipur before 2020?
    (a) 1963   (b) 1973   (c) 1983   (d) 1993

12. What event in 2021 triggered a refugee crisis in India's North-East?
    (a) Cyclone in Bangladesh   (b) Earthquake in Nepal
    (c) Coup in Myanmar   (d) Civil war in China

13. Which article is allegedly violated by "illegal settlements" in Churachandpur-Khoupum Protected Forest Area?
    (a) Article 370   (b) Article 371C   (c) Article 356   (d) Article 44

14. What are the Meiteis seeking to restore?
    (a) Kingdom status   (b) Tribal status
    (c) Union territory status   (d) Autonomous state status

15. In which year did NSCN split into NSCN (IM) and NSCN (Khaplang)?
    (a) 1975   (b) 1980   (c) 1988   (d) 1997

16. What does NFA stand for in the context of Naga history?
    (a) Naga Freedom Army   (b) Naga Federal Army
    (c) Naga Forces Association   (d) Naga Front Alliance

17. Which agreement recognized the unique history, culture, and position of Nagas?
    (a) Shillong Accord   (b) Nine-Point Agreement
    (c) Ceasefire Agreement   (d) Framework Agreement

18. How many Naga tribes are said to inhabit the Manipur Valley?
    (a) 10   (b) 12   (c) 15   (d) 20

19. What was the primary role given to Kukis by the British in Manipur?
    (a) To act as a buffer between Meiteis and Nagas
    (b) To govern the valley region
    (c) To collect taxes
    (d) To train the local army

20. When did Manipur merge with India?
    (a) 1947   (b) 1949   (c) 1950   (d) 1956

2024 Lok Sabha Election

Why in News?

18th Lok Sabha Election, conducted from 19 April 2024 to 01 June 2024, in 7 Phases, has concluded.

On June 4th, Results have been announced by Election Commission of India.

Explained:

Lok Sabha elections in India are held every five years to elect members to the lower house of Parliament, known as the Lok Sabha. The elections are conducted by the Election Commission of India in multiple phases to ensure security and smooth management across the vast and diverse country. Each of the 543 constituencies elects one Member of Parliament (MP) using a first-past-the-post system, where the candidate with the most votes wins. Universal adult suffrage allows every citizen aged 18 and above to vote.

The Lok Sabha elections are crucial as they determine the composition of the government. The party or coalition with a majority of seats forms the government, and its leader becomes the Prime Minister. Campaigns are often marked by extensive rallies, debates, and media coverage, focusing on various national and regional issues. These elections not only shape India's legislative agenda but also reflect the public's stance on governance, development, and socio-economic policies.

Way to marks:

- With its allies, NDA has still secured 293 Seats to win.
  - With support from N Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Nitish Kumar's JD(U), which won 16 and 12 Seats in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar.
- Bharatiya Janata Party merged as Largest Party with 240 Seats. (Vote Share of 36.56%)
  - BJP had won 303 and 282 Seats in 2019 and 2014, respectively.
- INDIA Alliance won 234 Seats.
  - Indian National Congress (INC) secured 99 Seats, (Vote Share of 21.19%) compared to 52 it won in 2019, making it 2nd Largest Party.

LOK SABHA ELECTIONS 2024
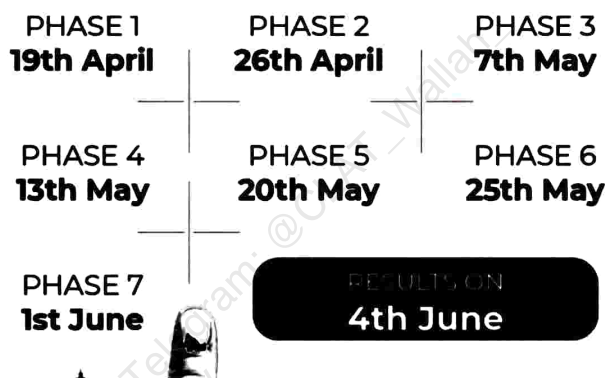
PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3
19th April	26th April	7th May

PHASE 4	PHASE 5	PHASE 6
13th May	20th May	25th May

PHASE 7	RESULTS ON
1st June	4th June

- o   Samajwadi Party in UP won 37 Seats and Trinamool Congress (TMC) won 29 Seats in West Bengal.

- Candidates from 41 Parties were Elected, an increase from 36 Parties in the 2019 Lok Sabha.

- National Parties won 346 Seats (64%), State Parties won 179 Seats (33%), while Unrecognised Parties and Independents secured 11 and 7 Seats, respectively.

Number of Voters and Voter Turnout, Duration of Election

- Total of 96.8 Crore Voters.
  - o   49.7 Crore are Male and 47.1 Crore are Female.
    - ▪ Including 88.4 Lakh Persons with Disabilities, 48000 Transgender Voters and 19.1 lakh Service Electors.
  - o   1.8 Crore 1st time Voters who are 18 to 19 years Old and 19.74 Crore in age group 20 – 29 Years.
    - ▪ In other words, those under 30 make up a 5th of Total Voters.

- 2024 Lok Sabha Election was Largest in history, lasting 44 days, 2nd Only to 1951 – 52 Indian General Election.
  - o   1st General Election to Lok Sabha was held over 68 Phases from 25 Oct 1951 to 21 Feb 1952.

- India set a world record with 64.2 Crore Voters, including 31.2 Crore Women.
  - o   This Voter Turnout is 1.5 Times that of Combined Voters in All G7 Countries (US, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Canada).

> **Related Facts**
> - *Jammu and Kashmir recorded their Highest Voter Turnout in four decades, with an Overall Turnout of 58.58%, including 51.05% in Valley.*
> - *Following 2019 Rule Change, Postal Ballots were counted first, followed by EVM Counting starting 30 Minutes later.*

Composition

- Average Age of MPs in 18th Lok Sabha is 56 years, down from 59 years in 17th Lok Sabha.

- 11% of MPs are 40 years or Younger, 38% are between 41 and 55 years, 52% are older than 55 years.

- Oldest MP is 82 (DML's TR Baalu) and Youngest MPs are 25 years old (Samajwadi Party's Pushpendra Saroj and Priya Saroj, Sanjana Jatav from Indian National Congress, Shambhavi Choudhary from Lok Janshakti Party).

- 74 MPs (14%) are Women, slightly Lower than 78 Women elected in 2019.

- For 1st time, No Muslim MP was sworn in as a Minister.

> **BJP's Performance**
> - *For 1st time, BJP won 1 Seat in Kerala.*
> - *No BJP MPs in Tamil Nadu and Punjab.*
> - *For 1st time, Any Party in 40 years, BJP won All 29 Seats in Madhya Pradesh.*
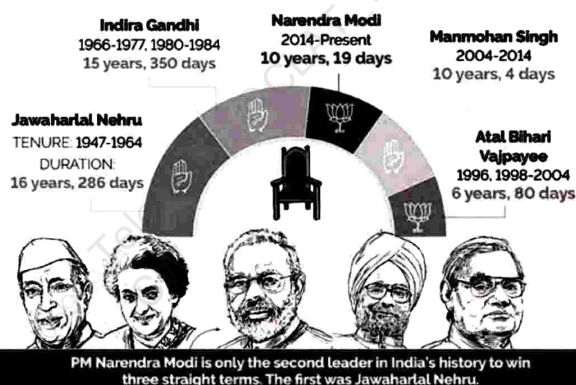
New Council of Minister

- PM Narendra Modi sworn in for 3rd Consecutive Term on 10 June 2024, along with 71 Ministers.

- 7 Women Leaders have been inducted into Council of Ministers, with 2 Securing Cabinet Positions.

Prominent Winners

- *Om Birla (Kota, Rajasthan) became 1ˢᵗ Lok Sabha Speaker in 20 years to be Re – elected as an MP.*

- *Priyanka Jarkiholi (Karnataka): Youngest Tribal Woman to win from an Unreserved Seat.*

- *BJP's Shankar Lalwani won by a record margin of 11,75,092 Votes in Indore, where NOTA also set a record with 2.18 lakh Voters opting for "None of the Above".*

- *Eknath Shinde Shiv Sena Candidate Ravindra Dattaram Waikar won Mumbai North West Lok Sabha Seat with a margin of Only 48 Votes.*

INDIA'S LONGEST-SERVING PRIME MINISTERS

PM Narendra Modi makes history as he becomes one of the few prime ministers to lead India for over a decade.

Indira Gandhi 1966-1977, 1980-1984 — 15 years, 350 days

Narendra Modi 2014-Present — 10 years, 19 days

Manmohan Singh 2004-2014 — 10 years, 4 days

Jawaharlal Nehru TENURE: 1947-1964 DURATION: 16 years, 286 days

Atal Bihari Vajpayee 1996, 1998-2004 — 6 years, 80 days

PM Narendra Modi is only the second leader in India's history to win three straight terms. The first was Jawaharlal Nehru.

Facts related to Elections

- Indelible Ink was used in Voting Process for 1ˢᵗ time during 3ʳᵈ Lok Sabha (1962 – 1967)

- 13ᵗʰ Lok Sabha Elections witnessed piloting of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).

- 14ᵗʰ Lok Sabha Election, Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) were introduced for 1ˢᵗ time.

- NOTA Option was presented for 1ˢᵗ time in 16ᵗʰ Lok Sabha.

- In 17ᵗʰ Lok Sabha, EVMs were 100% backed by a "Voter – Verifiable Paper Audit Trail" (VVPAT) for 1ˢᵗ time.

Indelible Ink

- *Manufactured By: Mysore Paints & Varnish Ltd (1962, Karnataka)*

- *Containing Silver Nitrate for Lasting Visibility and Resistance to Removal for up to 72 hours.*

Organisation of Parliament

- Also known as "Westminster Model of Government".

- "Legislative Organ" of Union Government.

- "Articles 79 to 122" in "Part V" of Constitution deal with Organisation, Composition, Duration, Officers, Procedures, Privileges, Powers and so on of the Parliament.

- Parliament of India consists of 3 parts viz, "President", "Council of States" and "House of the People". (Article 79)
  - In 1954, Hindi names "Rajya Sabha" and "Lok Sabha" were adopted by "Council of States" and "House of People" respectively.

- Rajya Sabha is "Upper House" (2ⁿᵈ Chamber or House of Elders) and Lok Sabha is "Lower House" (1ˢᵗ Chamber or Popular House).
  - Former represents "States and Union Territories" of Indian Union, while the latter represents "People of India" as a whole.

Lok Sabha

- "Maximum Strength" of Lok Sabha is fixed at "550".
  - Out of this, 530 Members are to be Representatives of the States, 20 Members are to be Representatives of Union Territories.
- At present, Lok Sabha has "543 Members".
  - Of these, 530 Members represent States, 13 Members represent Union Territories.
- Representatives of States in Lok Sabha are "Directly elected by the People" from Territorial Constituencies in States.
- Election is based on "Principle of Universal Adult Franchise".
  - Every Indian Citi zen who is above 18 years of age and who is not disqualified under Provisions of Constitution or Any Law is eligible to vote at such election.
    - Voting Age was reduced from 21 to 18 years by the 61st Constitutional Amendment Act, 1988.

> ### 1st Lok Sabha (1952 – 1957)
> - *Total Seats: 499*
> - *1st Ballots were cast in tehsils of Chini and Pangi in Himachal Pradesh.*
> - *1st Voter of India: Shyam Saran Negi*
> - *Result: INC (364) > CPI (16) > SPI*

> ### Anglo Indians & 104th CAA, 2019
> - *"Anglo – Indians" were provided "2 Nominated Seats" in "Lok Sabha" (Article 331) and "1 Nominated Seat" in "State Legislative Assemblies" (Article 333) to ensure "Adequate Representation" of Community in Elected Legislative Bodies.*
> - *Idea of such nominations can be traced back to "Frank Anthony", who was President of All India Anglo – Indian Association.*
> - *Originally, this provision was to operate till 1960.*
> - *104th Amendment of Indian Constitution ceased Reservation of Seats for Anglo – Indians in Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies.*

Prime Minister & its Council of Ministers

- Prime Minister is appointed by "President".
- Normally, President has to invite "Leader of Majority Party" to form the Government.
  - In case, "No Single Party" is in Clear Majority, President invites "Person" who is likely to command support of Two or More Parties which make up Majority in Lok Sabha.
- Prime Minister is normally Leader of Majority Party in "Lok Sabha".
  - However, there have been cases when a "Member of Rajya Sabha" was made Prime Minister.
- "President" administers to him "Oaths of Office and Secrecy".
- Prime Minister holds office for "5 years".
- Prime Minister holds office "During Pleasure of President".
- "Salary and Allowances" of Prime Minister are determined by "Parliament" from time to time.

Council of Ministers

- COM consists of 3 Categories of Ministers: Cabinet Ministers, Ministers of State, Deputy Ministers.

- Cabinet Ministers: Head of Important Ministries of Central Government like Home, Defence, Finance, External Affairs and so forth.
  - Cabinet is "Chief Policy Formulating Body" of Central Government.

- Ministers of State: Either be given Independent Charge of Ministries / Departments or can be attached to Cabinet Ministers.

- Deputy Ministers: Attached to Cabinet Ministers or Ministers of State and assist them in their Administrative, Political and Parliamentary Duties.

- Deputy Prime Ministers are appointed mostly for Political Reasons.

- All Ministers shall be appointed by President on advice of PM.

- Total Number of Ministers, including Prime Minister, in COM shall "Not exceed 15% of Total Strength of Lok Sabha".
  - This provision was added by "91st Amendment Act of 2003".

- A Minister who is "Not a Member of the Parliament" (Either House) for Any Period of "6 Consecutive Months" shall cease to be a Minister.

Facts related to Prime Ministers of India

- **Jawaharlal Nehru**
  - India's 1st Prime Minister.
  - Longest – serving PM (16 years and 286 days).
  - 1st PM who died In – Office.
  - 1st PM to have been born in the 19th Century.

  Related Facts: JL Nehru
  - *PM of Dominion of India (15 Aug 1947 – 26 Jan 1950)*
  - *PM of Interim Government of India (2 Sep 1946 – 14 Aug 1947)*

- **Gulzarilal Nanda**
  - India's 1st Acting Prime Minister.
  - "Only Man" to have "Twice" served as "Acting Prime Minister of India".

- **Lal Bahadur Shastri**
  - 2nd PM of India & 2nd PM who died In-Office.
  - Indo – Pakistani War of 1965, Originator of the phrase "Jai Jawan Jai Kisan."

- **Indira Gandhi**
  - India's 3rd and 1st Female Prime Minister.
  - 3rd PM who died In – Office.
  - 2nd Longest – serving PM.
  - 1st PM to come from the Upper House (Rajya Sabha).

  Related Facts: Indira Gandhi
  After Operation Blue Star, on 31 Oct 1984, Indira Gandhi was shot dead by Satwant Singh and Beant Singh – two of her bodyguards.

- **Morarji Desai**
  - India's 1st Non – Congress PM (6th Lok Sabha_.
  - India's Oldest Prime Minister (81 years).
  - 2nd and Last PM to have been born in 19th Century.

- **Charan Singh**
  - Only PM who has never addressed the Legislature.

- **Rajiv Gandhi**
  - India's Youngest Prime Minister (40 years).
  - 4th PM who died In – Office.

- **VP Singh**
  - 1st PM to leave following a No-Confidence Vote.
  - Accepted Mandal Commission's recommendations.

- **Chandra Shekhar**
  - 1st PM who has never held any Government Office.

- **PV Narasimha Rao**
  - India's 1st PM of South Indian Origin (Andhra Pradesh).
  - 1st PM (outside of Nehru—Gandhi Family) who had completed his tenure of 5 years.
  - Demolition of the Babri Masjid, LPG Reforms.

- **HD Deve Gowda**
  - India's 2nd PM of South Indian Origin (Karnataka).
  - 2nd PM to come from Upper House.

- **Inder Kumar Gujral**
  - 3rd PM to come from the Upper House.
  - Gujral Doctrine

- **Atal Bihari Vajpayee**
  - PM with Shortest Tenure (16 days)
  - Conduct of 5 Underground Nuclear Explosions in Pokhran, India and Pakistan signed the Lahore Declaration 1999, Kargil War with Pakistan

Related Facts: Morarji Desai
- *His birthday was celebrated once every 4 years because he was born on Feb 29.*
- *Honoured with Highest Civilian Award of Pakistan (Nishan – e – Pakistan).*

Related Facts: Rajiv Gandhi
- *In 1984, Congress secured an Absolute Majority (401 of 552 Seats in Lok Sabha).*
- *Maximum Number received by Any Party in the History of India.*

Important Facts related to ECI
CEC: Rajiv Kumar (25th)
Other ECs: Gyanesh Kumar, Sukhbir Singh Sandhu
1st CEC: Sukumar Sen
1st Woman CEC: VS Ramadevi
Last CEC having Tenure of 6 years : TN Seshan (1990-96)

Related Facts: AB Vajpeyee
In 1998, Vajpayee's National Democratic Alliance (NDA) won, the "1st Non – Congress Alliance" to do so.

- **Manmohan Singh**
  o India's 1ˢᵗ Sikh (Minority Community) PM.

- **Narendra Modi**
  o 1ˢᵗ PM to have been born in an Independent India.
  o 4ᵗʰ PM (after JL Nehru, Indira Gandhi, AB Vajpayee) who served Two Terms or More.
  o 2ⁿᵈ Indian Prime Minister to win a 3ʳᵈ Straight Term.
  o 3ʳᵈ Longest – serving PM.

Related Facts: Narendra Modi

- *In 2014, BJP – led NDA got an Absolute Majority (336 out of 543 Lok Sabha Seats).*
- *"1ˢᵗ Non – Congress Single Party Majority Government".*
- *BJP itself became "1ˢᵗ Party" since 1984 to get a Majority in Lok Sabha.*

Related Facts

- *Since 1947, India has had "14 Prime Ministers".*
- *Longest Serving Parties: INC (54 yrs) > BJP (15 yrs) > Janta Dal (2 yrs 268 days)*
- *Shortest Serving Parties: JD (S) < SJP (R) < Janta Party (2yr 126 days)*
- *PMs who won Bharat Ratna: Lal Bahadur Shastri, Atal Bihari Bajpayee, Indira Gandhi, Moraji Desai, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Gulzarilal Nanda, Choudhary Charan Singh, PV Narasimha Rao*

Jawaharlal Nehru Aug 15, 1947- May 27, 1964	**Gulzari Lal Nanda*** May 27-Jun 9, 1964	**Lal Bahadur Shastri** Jun 9, 1964- Jan 11, 1966	**Gulzari Lal Nanda*** Jan 11-Jan 24, 1966	**Indira Gandhi** Jan 24, 1966- Mar 24, 1977	**Morarji Desai** Mar 24, 1977- July 28, 1979
Charan Singh July 28, 1979- Jan 14, 1980	**Indira Gandhi** Jan 14, 1980- Oct 31, 1984	**Rajiv Gandhi** Oct 31, 1984- Dec 2, 1989	**Vishwanath Pratap Singh** Dec 2, 1989- Nov 10, 1990	**Chandra Shekhar** Nov 10, 1990- June 21, 1991	**P. V. Narasimha Rao** June 21, 1991- May 16, 1996
Atal Bihari Vajpayee May 16-June 1, 1996	**H. D. Deve Gowda** June 1, 1996- Apr 21, 1997	**Inder Kumar Gujral** Apr 21, 1997- Mar 19, 1998	**Atal Bihari Vajpayee** Mar 19, 1998 - May 22, 2004	**Manmohan Singh** May 22, 2004- May 26, 2014	**Narendra Modi** Sworn in on May 26, 2014

Election Commission of India	
Particular	**Details**
Established	January 25, 1950
Constitutional Provision	Article 324
Composition	Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and two Election Commissioners
Appointment	President of India
Tenure	6 years or up to age 65, whichever is earlier
Removal	CEC: Removed by the President via parliamentary resolution ECs: Removed on CEC recommendation
Functions	Conducts elections to Parliament, State Legislatures, and offices of President and Vice President

History of Office of Speaker and Deputy Speaker

- *Offices of Speaker and Deputy Speaker originated in India in "1921" under the provisions of "Government of India Act of 1919" (Montague – Chelmsford Reforms).*

- *In 1921, Frederick Whyte and Sachidanand Sinha were appointed by Governor – General of India as 1st Speaker and 1st Deputy Speaker (respectively) of Central Legislative Assembly.*
    - *In 1925, Vithalbhai J Patel became 1st Indian and 1st Elected Speaker of Central Legislative Assembly.*

- *GV Mavalankar and Ananthasayanam Ayyangar had the distinction of being 1st Speaker and 1st Deputy Speaker (respectively) of Lok Sabha.*
    - *GV Mavalankar held Post of Speaker in Constituent Assembly (Legislative) as well as Provisional Parliament.*
    - *He held Post of Speaker of Lok Sabha continuously from 1946 to 1956.*

- *Longest – serving Speaker was Balram Jakhar (7th & 8th), whose tenure lasted 9 years and 329 days.*

- *Female Speaker: Meira Kumar (15th, 2009 – 2014), Sumitra Mahajan (16th, 2014 – 2019)*

- *1st SC Speaker: GMC Balayogi*

- *1st Left Leader Speaker: Somnath Chatterjee*

Pepper it With

- One nation one election , US president election 2024.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. How many seats did the NDA secure in the recent election?
    (a) 240　　　　　(b) 273　　　　　(c) 293　　　　　(d) 303

2. What was the BJP's vote share in the recent election?
    (a) 31.56%　　　(b) 33.56%　　　(c) 35.56%　　　(d) 36.56%

3. How many seats did the Indian National Congress secure in the recent election?
    (a) 52　　　　　(b) 99　　　　　(c) 234　　　　　(d) 303

4. How many parties had elected candidates in the recent Lok Sabha election?
    (a) 36　　　　　(b) 39　　　　　(c) 41　　　　　(d) 43

5. What is the total number of voters in India?
    (a) 88.4 crore　　(b) 92.8 crore　　(c) 94.8 crore　　(d) 96.8 crore

6. How long did the 2024 Lok Sabha Election last?
    (a) 38 days　　　(b) 44 days　　　(c) 56 days　　　(d) 68 days

7. What is the average age of MPs in the 18th Lok Sabha?
    (a) 52 years　　　(b) 54 years　　　(c) 56 years　　　(d) 59 years

8. How many women MPs were elected in the 18th Lok Sabha?
    (a) 68　　　　　(b) 71　　　　　(c) 74　　　　　(d) 78

9. When was indelible ink first used in the voting process?
    (a) 1951-1952　　(b) 1957-1962　　(c) 1962-1967　　(d) 1967-1971

10. In which Lok Sabha election were EVMs introduced for the first time?
    (a) 12th　　　　(b) 13th　　　　(c) 14th　　　　(d) 15th

11. What is the maximum strength of Lok Sabha fixed at?
    (a) 530　　　　　(b) 543　　　　　(c) 545　　　　　(d) 550

12. When was the voting age reduced from 21 to 18 years?
    (a) 1988　　　　(b) 1991　　　　(c) 1996　　　　(d) 2000

13. What is the maximum percentage of ministers allowed in the Council of Ministers relative to the total strength of Lok Sabha?
   (a) 10%   (b) 15%   (c) 20%   (d) 25%

14. Who was India's longest-serving Prime Minister?
   (a) Indira Gandhi   (b) Jawaharlal Nehru   (c) Narendra Modi   (d) Manmohan Singh

15. Who was India's youngest Prime Minister?
   (a) Rajiv Gandhi   (b) Indira Gandhi   (c) Narendra Modi   (d) Atal Bihari Vajpayee

16. Which Prime Minister never addressed the Legislature?
   (a) Charan Singh   (b) Gulzarilal Nanda   (c) Morarji Desai   (d) V.P. Singh

17. Who was India's first Prime Minister from a minority community?
   (a) Manmohan Singh   (b) P.V. Narasimha Rao
   (c) H.D. Deve Gowda   (d) I.K. Gujral

18. Which Prime Minister had the shortest tenure of 16 days?
   (a) Gulzarilal Nanda   (b) Charan Singh
   (c) Atal Bihari Vajpayee   (d) H.D. Deve Gowda

19. Who was the first Prime Minister to be born in independent India?
   (a) Rajiv Gandhi   (b) Narendra Modi   (c) Manmohan Singh   (d) Atal Bihari Vajpayee

20. How many Prime Ministers have died in office?
   (a) 2   (b) 3   (c) 4   (d) 5

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magazine.

2024 Lok Sabha Election

Prominent Winners

- Om Birla (Kota, Rajasthan) became 1st Lok Sabha Speaker in 20 years to be Re – elected as an MP
- Priyanka Jarkiholi (Karnataka): Youngest Tribal Woman to win from an Unreserved Seat.
- BJP's Shankar Lalwani won by a record margin of 11,75,092 Votes in Indore, where NOTA also set a record with 2.18 lakh Voters opting for "None of the Above".
- Eknath Shinde Shiv Sena Candidate Ravindra Dattaram Waikar won Mumbai North West Lok Sabha Seat with a margin of Only 48 Votes.

Indelible Ink

- Manufactured By: Mysore Paints & Varnish Ltd (1962, Karnataka)
- Containing Silver Nitrate for Lasting Visibility and Resistance to Removal for up to 72 hours.
- Indelible Ink was used in Voting Process for 1st time during 3rd Lok Sabha (1962 – 1967)

Facts related to Elections

- 13th Lok Sabha Elections witnessed piloting of Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).
- 14th Lok Sabha Election, Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) were introduced for 1st time.
- NOTA Option was presented for 1st time in 16th Lok Sabha.
- In 17th Lok Sabha, EVMs were 100% backed by a "Voter – Verifiable Paper Audit Trail" (VVPAT) for 1st time.

New Council of Minister Composition

- PM Narendra Modi sworn in for 3rd Consecutive Term on 10 June 2024, along with 71 Ministers
- 7 Women Leaders have been inducted into Council of Ministers, with 2 Securing Cabinet Positions

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Why in News?
- 18th Lok Sabha Election, conducted from 19 April 2024 to 01 June 2024, in 7 Phases, has concluded.
- On June 4th, Results have been announced by Election Commission of India.
- Theme: Chunav ka Parv, Desh ka Garv

Key Highlights
- With its allies, NDA has still secured 293 Seats to win.
  - With support from N Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and Nitish Kumar's JD(U), which won 16 and 12 Seats in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar.
- Bharatiya Janata Party merged as Largest Party with 240 Seats. (Vote Share of 36.56%)
  - BJP had won 303 and 282 Seats in 2019 and 2014, respectively.
- INDIA Alliance won 234 Seats.
  - Indian National Congress (INC) secured 99 Seats, (Vote Share of 21.19%) compared to 52 it won in 2019, making it 2nd Largest Party.
  - Samajwadi Party in UP won 37 Seats and Trinamool Congress (TMC) won 29 Seats in West Bengal.
- National Parties won 346 Seats (64%), State Parties won 179 Seats (33%), while Unrecognised Parties and Independents secured 11 and 7 Seats, respectively.

Number of Voters and Voter Turnout, Duration of Election
- Total of 96.8 Crore Voters.
- 1.8 Crore 1st time Voters who are 18 to 19 years Old and 19.74 Crore in age group 20 – 29 Years.
- 2024 Lok Sabha Election was Largest in history, lasting 44 days, 2nd Only to 1951 – 52 Indian General Election.
  - 1st General Election to Lok Sabha was held over 68 Phases from 25 Oct 1951 to 21 Feb 1952.
- India set a world record with 64.2 Crore Voters, including 31.2 Crore Women.
- Jammu and Kashmir recorded their Highest Voter Turnout in four decades, with an Overall Turnout of 58.58%, including 51.05% in Valley

Composition of 18th Lok Sabha
- Average Age of MPs in 18th Lok Sabha is 56 years, down from 59 years in 17th Lok Sabha.
- 11% of MPs are 40 years or Younger, 38% are between 41 and 55 years, 52% are older than 55 years
- Oldest MP is 82 (DML's TR Baalu) and Youngest MPs are 25 years old (Samajwadi Party's Pushpendra Saroj and Priya Saroj, Sanjana Jatav from Indian National Congress, Shambhavi Choudhary from Lok Janshakti Party).
- 74 MPs (14%) are Women, slightly Lower than 78 Women elected in 2019
- For 1st time, No Muslim MP was sworn in as a Minister.

Controversy Surrounding NEET UG 2024 Examinations

Why in News?

Results for National Eligibility – cum – Entrance Test (NEET – UG) 2024 have been marred with Allegations of Irregularities and Paper Leak.

Inflated Marks this year have caught Attention of Medical Aspirants who fear Difficult Admission Process in Medical Colleges in Upcoming Academic Year.

Judges in the case - vacation bench of Justices Vikram Nath and SVN Bhatti.

Explained:

India's National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) is the sole gateway to government and many private medical colleges. Introduced to standardize medical education, NEET aims to ensure a baseline level of knowledge for future doctors. However, the recent 2024 edition has been plagued by controversy.

Allegations of a question paper leak and inflated marks awarded to compensate for exam disruptions have cast a shadow on the exam's fairness. Critics argue that this disadvantages students from rural backgrounds or those who can't afford expensive coaching institutes. With several students scoring a perfect mark, an unprecedented number, and reports of irregularities at specific centers, many believe the system is flawed. The controversy has led to protests, demands for a re-exam, and even Supreme Court intervention. The outcome will determine public trust in NEET and the future of countless medical aspirants in India.

Way to marks:

The Issue

- On June 4, National Testing Agency (NTA) released Results for National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test, Undergraduate (NEET UG) 2024 examination.

- Results received Immediate Criticism due to an Unusual Occurrence—67 Candidates achieved a Perfect Score of 720 out of 720, securing perfect Rank AIR 1.

- Also, Discrepancies emerged concerning Individuals who obtained Marks of 718 or 719, with skeptics deeming such scores implausible within Exam's Framework.

- Also, it was found that 8 of these Candidates who scored All India Rank 1 are from Same Examination Center in Haryana, with their Sequence Numbers being the Same.

Conditionality

- NTA's Response for Increase in Number of Toppers

- NTA Official also noted that Question Paper was prepared using a New NCERT Textbook.

- However, Some Students had Old NCERT Textbooks.

- Due to which NTA had to assign 5 Marks to All Students who had marked one of the 2 Options.

- Because of this reason, Marks of a Total of 44 students increased from 715 to 720, which resulted in an increased Number of Toppers.

- NTA attributed Increase in High Scores to Rise in Candidates.

- Number of Candidates who appeared in 2023 was 20,38,596, while it rose to 23,33,297 in 2024.

**National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET)**
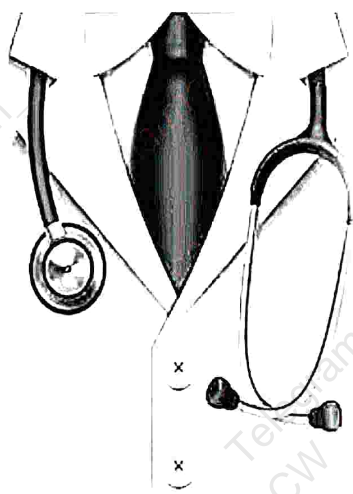
- Entrance Examination for Students who wish to pursue Undergraduate Medical Courses (MBBS/BDS) and Postgraduate Courses (MD/MS) in Government or Private Medical Colleges.

- Started in – 2013.

- National Testing Agency (NTA) conducts NEET on behalf of Ministry of Education (Dharmendra Pradhan).

- Tamil Nadu has opposed the NEET since it was made compulsory in 2017. The exam is seen as **a threat to the state's autonomy, healthcare system, social justice, and educational quality.**
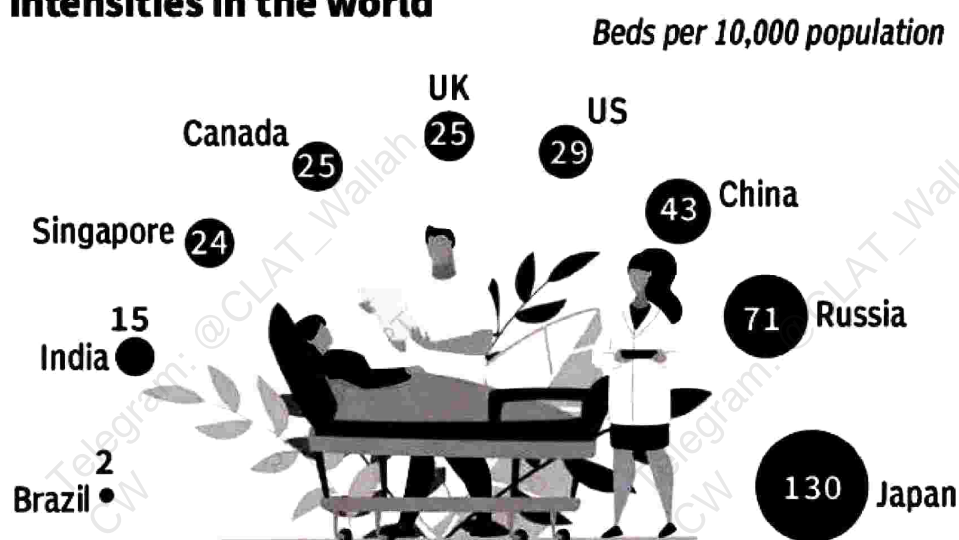
National Testing Agency (NTA)

- Autonomous Organization in India responsible for conducting Entrance Examinations for Higher Educational Institutions.

- Established in Nov 2017 by Ministry of Education to Standardize and Streamline Conduct of Entrance Exams across India.

- Objective: To improve Quality and Transparency of Entrance Examinations, ensuring Fairness and Efficiency in Assessment Process.

- Functions: Conducting Exams, Developing Question Papers, Result Processing

- HQ: New Delhi.

- The Centre has appointed Pradeep Kharola, an IAS officer, as the Interim Director General of the National Testing Agency (NTA). He will report to NTA Chairperson Pradeep Kumar Joshi.

- Kharola was appointed after the NTA's DG Subodh Kumar was sacked amid allegations of paper leaks and widespread irregularities in the holding of exams like NEET-UG and UGC-NET.

Healthcare sector in India

Key Highlights of the Report

- Post Covid, the government healthcare expenditure has increased from 1.2-1.4 percent to 1.6-2.2 percent of GDP.

Government puts more emphasis on healthcare expenditure

Government healthcare expenditure as % of GDP

FY14 FY15 FY16 FY17 FY18 FY19 FY20 FY21 FY22 FY23
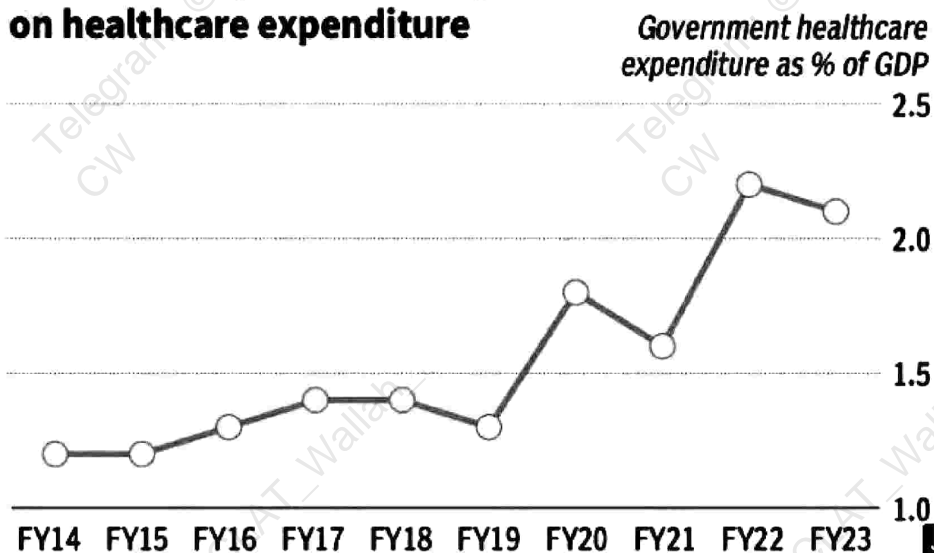
- Average revenue per occupied bed day (ARPOB) increased from ₹34,277 to ₹49,836 during FY20-H1 FY24.
- India has one of the lowest per capita bed counts in the world.

India has one of the lowest bed intensities in the world

Beds per 10,000 population

UK 25
Canada 25
US 29
China 43
Singapore 24
Russia 71
India 15
Brazil 2
Japan 130

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| Recent steps Taken by the Government for the Growth of Healthcare Sector |

- **National Digital Health Mission (NDHM):** Launched in 2020, NDHM aims to create a digital health ecosystem, including health IDs for citizens and the establishment of a national digital health infrastructure.

- **Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY):** AB-PMJAY, launched in 2018, is a national health protection scheme that provides financial protection to over 100 million families for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization.

- **National Health Policy 2017:** The National Health Policy outlines the government's vision to achieve the highest possible level of health and well-being for all and emphasizes preventive and promotive healthcare.

- **Health and Wellness Centers (HWCs):** The government is working towards transforming primary health centers into HWCs to provide comprehensive primary healthcare services, including preventive and promotive care.

- **Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY):** PMSSY aims to enhance tertiary care capacities and strengthen medical education in the country by setting up new AIIMS (All India Institutes of Medical Sciences) institutions and upgrading existing government medical colleges.

- **Research and Development Initiatives:** The government has been encouraging research and development in healthcare, including support for the development of vaccines, drugs, and medical technologies.

- **National Medical Commission (NMC) Act:** The NMC Act, passed in 2019, aims to bring reforms in medical education and practice by replacing the Medical Council of India (MCI) and promoting transparency and accountability.

- **Jan Aushadhi Scheme:** The Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) aims to provide quality generic medicines at affordable prices through Jan Aushadhi Kendras.

Pepper it With

- Laws against offenses in Public Examination.

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PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. How many candidates achieved a perfect score of 720 out of 720 in the NEET UG 2024 examination?
   (a) 44   (b) 67   (c) 8   (d) 20

2. Which organization conducts the NEET examination?
   (a) Ministry of Education   (b) National Testing Agency
   (c) Medical Council of India   (d) AIIMS

3. In which year was NEET started?
   (a) 2013   (b) 2017   (c) 2020   (d) 2024

4. Who is the current Interim Director General of the National Testing Agency?
   (a) Subodh Kumar   (b) Pradeep Kumar Joshi
   (c) Pradeep Kharola   (d) Dharmendra Pradhan

5. What is the full form of NEET?
   (a) National Entrance Eligibility Test   (b) National Eligibility cum Entrance Test
   (c) National Education and Entrance Test   (d) National Examination for Eligibility and Training

6. Which state has opposed NEET since it was made compulsory in 2017?
   (a) Karnataka   (b) Kerala   (c) Tamil Nadu   (d) Andhra Pradesh

7. What is the headquarters of the National Testing Agency?
   (a) Mumbai   (b) Chennai   (c) Kolkata   (d) New Delhi

8. According to the image, which country has the highest number of beds per 10,000 population?
   (a) Russia   (b) China   (c) Japan   (d) US

9. How many beds per 10,000 population does India have?
   (a) 2   (b) 15   (c) 24   (d) 29

10. What is the full form of ARPOB mentioned in the document?
    (a) Average Revenue per Occupied Bed   (b) Annual Revenue per Operating Budget
    (c) Average Rate per Outpatient Bill   (d) Annual Report on Patient Occupancy Beds

11. What is the current range of government healthcare expenditure as a percentage of GDP according to the document?
    (a) 1.2-1.4%   (b) 1.6-2.2%   (c) 2.5-3.0%   (d) 3.5-4.0%

12. In which year was the National Digital Health Mission launched?
    (a) 2017   (b) 2018   (c) 2019   (d) 2020

13. What is the aim of the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY)?
    (a) To provide digital health IDs
    (b) To establish new AIIMS institutions
    (c) To provide financial protection for hospitalization
    (d) To promote generic medicines

14. Which act replaced the Medical Council of India?
    (a) National Health Policy Act   (b) National Medical Commission Act
    (c) Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Act   (d) Jan Aushadhi Act

15. What does PMSSY stand for?
    (a) Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana   (b) Prime Minister's Special Scheme for Youth
    (c) Public Medical Services Support Yojana   (d) Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Seva Yojana

16. According to the graph, in which fiscal year did government healthcare expenditure as a percentage of GDP peak?
    (a) FY20   (b) FY21   (c) FY22   (d) FY23

17. How many candidates appeared for NEET in 2024?
    (a) 20, 38, 596   (b) 23, 33, 297   (c) 25, 67, 345   (d) 18, 72, 341

18. What is the full form of HWCs mentioned in the document?
    (a) Health and Wellness Centers   (b) Hospital Ward Complexes
    (c) Healthcare Workers' Cooperatives   (d) Health Watch Committees

19. Which scheme aims to provide quality generic medicines at affordable prices?
    (a) Ayushman Bharat   (b) National Digital Health Mission
    (c) Jan Aushadhi Scheme   (d) PMSSY

20. Which country has 25 beds per 10,000 population?
    (a) Singapore   (b) Canada   (c) UK   (d) Both b and c

National Litigation Policy

Why in News?

With an aim to Reduce Burden of Pending Court Cases in which Government is a Party, Union Ministry of Law and Justice approved National Litigation Policy, which will now be sent to Cabinet for approval.

Explained:

The Indian government's proposed National Litigation Policy (NLP) aims to transform the government into a more responsible litigant as the government is the biggest litigant in the country. Recognizing the massive backlog in courts, the NLP seeks to streamline government lawsuits. This could involve setting financial thresholds for appeals and prioritizing cases with significant legal issues.

The NLP is crucial for India's overburdened judicial system. By reducing frivolous lawsuits and expediting settlements, the policy could free up valuable court time to tackle other pending cases. This would benefit both the government, which would save resources, and citizens seeking timely legal resolutions.

Way to marks:

Background of National Litigation Policy

- Roughly 50 million Legal Cases are Pending at various levels of Judiciary across India and Government is India's leading Litigator.
  - Government is responsible for 73% of All Cases admitted by Supreme Court.
- Launched in 2010 to make Government a "More Responsible Litigant".
  - However, Policy was Not implemented.
- In 2015, NDA Government revived the plan and in a reply to Lok Sabha, the then-Law minister (in 2021) said Policy was Under Consideration.

National Litigation Policy

- Aim: To transform Government into an Efficient and Responsible Litigant.
- Efficient Litigant: A Litigant who –
  - Is represented by Competent and Sensitive Legal Persons.
  - Focus on Core Issues involved in Litigation and address them squarely.
  - Manage and Conduct Litigation in a Cohesive, Coordinated and Time-bound Manner.
  - Ensure that Good Cases are Won and Bad Cases are Not Unnecessarily Pursued.
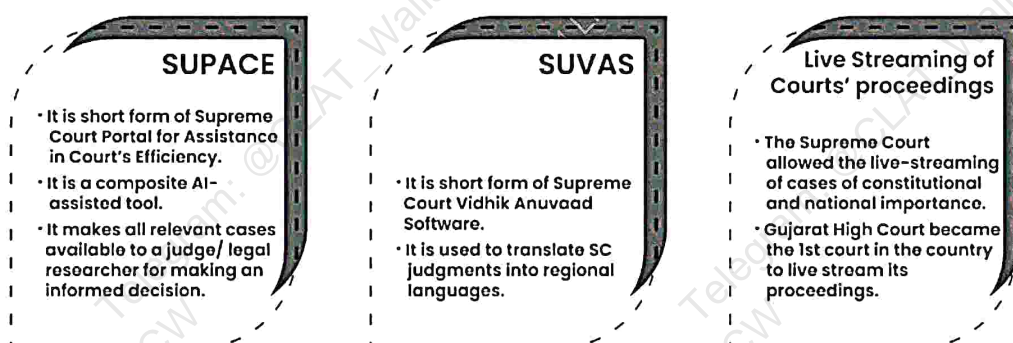
- Responsible Litigant: A Litigant who –
  - That False Pleas and Technical Points will Not be taken and shall be Discouraged.
  - Ensuring that Correct Facts and All Relevant Documents will be placed before the court.
  - That Nothing will be Concealed from the Court and there will be No Attempt to mislead Any Court or Tribunal.
  - Prioritisation in Litigation has to be achieved with Particular Emphasis on Welfare Legislation, Social Reform, Weaker Sections.
- Policy suggests that Pending Cases with Government as Party to be Reviewed on Priority Basis to enable Quick Disposal.
- Also proposed a monitoring and review mechanism to Sensitise Government in Important Cases and Avoid Delay and Neglect of the Same.

National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms

- Set up in 2011
- **Objectives:** Increasing Access by Reducing Delays and Arrears in Judicial Administration
  - Enhancing Accountability through Structural Changes and by setting Performance Standards and Capacities.
- **Goal:** Reduce Average Pendency Time from 15 years to 3 years.

Court	Pendency in 2019	Pendency in 2020	Pendency in 2021	Pendency in 2022
Supreme Court	59,535 (as on December 2019	64,426 (as on December 2020)	69,855 (as on December 2021)	70,154 (as on March 2022)
High Courts	46,84,354 (as on December 2019)	56,42,567 (as on December 2020)	56,49,068 (as on December 2021)	58,90,726 (as on March 2022)
District & Subordinate Courts	3,22,96,224 (as on December 2019)	3,66,39,436 (as on December 2020)	4,05,79,062 (as on December 2020)	4,09,85,490 (as on March 2022)

Steps taken for the usage of technology in the Judicial Process

SUPACE
- It is short form of Supreme Court Portal for Assistance in Court's Efficiency.
- It is a composite AI-assisted tool.
- It makes all relevant cases available to a judge/ legal researcher for making an informed decision.

SUVAS
- It is short form of Supreme Court Vidhik Anuvaad Software.
- It is used to translate SC judgments into regional languages.

Live Streaming of Courts' proceedings
- The Supreme Court allowed the live-streaming of cases of constitutional and national importance.
- Gujarat High Court became the 1st court in the country to live stream its proceedings.

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04 Information Kiosks
05 Email
06 Judicial Service Centres (JSCs)
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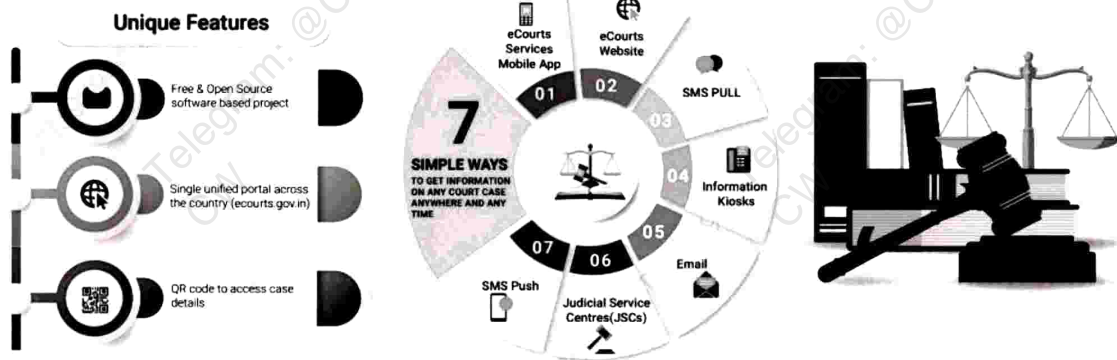
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PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Approximately how many legal cases are pending at various levels of judiciary across India?
    (a) 10 million
    (b) 30 million
    (c) 50 million
    (d) 70 million

2. What percentage of cases admitted by the Supreme Court is the government responsible for?
    (a) 53%
    (b) 63%
    (c) 73%
    (d) 83%

3. In which year was the National Litigation Policy initially launched?
    (a) 2008
    (b) 2010
    (c) 2012
    (d) 2015

4. When did the Government revive the plan for the National Litigation Policy?
    (a) 2013
    (b) 2015
    (c) 2017
    (d) 2019

5. What is the primary aim of the National Litigation Policy?
    (a) To increase the number of government cases
    (b) To transform government into an efficient and responsible litigant
    (c) To extend the duration of court proceedings
    (d) To reduce the number of judges

6. Which of the following is NOT a characteristic of an efficient litigant according to the policy?
    (a) Represented by competent legal persons
    (b) Focuses on core issues in litigation
    (c) Manages litigation in a time-bound manner
    (d) Pursues all cases regardless of merit

7. What does the policy suggest regarding pending cases with the government as a party?
    (a) They should be ignored
    (b) They should be reviewed on priority basis
    (c) They should be automatically dismissed
    (d) They should be transferred to lower courts

8. In which year was the National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms set up?
    (a) 2009
    (b) 2010
    (c) 2011
    (d) 2012

9. What is the goal of the National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms regarding average pendency time?
    (a) Reduce from 15 years to 10 years
    (b) Reduce from 15 years to 7 years
    (c) Reduce from 15 years to 5 years
    (d) Reduce from 15 years to 3 years

10. Which of the following is NOT an objective of the National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms?
    (a) Increasing access to justice
    (b) Reducing delays in judicial administration
    (c) Enhancing accountability
    (d) Increasing the number of cases filed

11. According to the policy, what should not be concealed from the court?
    (a) Personal opinions   (b) Correct facts and relevant documents
    (c) Legal strategies   (d) Witness identities

12. What does the National Litigation Policy propose to avoid delay and neglect of important cases?
    (a) Hiring more judges   (b) Extending court hours
    (c) A monitoring and review mechanism   (d) Outsourcing case management

13. Which aspect does the policy emphasize for prioritization in litigation?
    (a) Corporate cases   (b) Welfare legislation
    (c) International disputes   (d) Property disputes

14. What does the policy discourage in litigation?
    (a) Using technical points   (b) Presenting evidence
    (c) Cross-examination   (d) Expert testimonies

15. What type of legal persons should represent an efficient litigant according to the policy?
    (a) Aggressive and confrontational   (b) Competent and sensitive
    (c) Young and inexperienced   (d) Retired judges only

16. What does the policy say about bad cases?
    (a) They should be pursued aggressively   (b) They should not be unnecessarily pursued
    (c) They should be settled out of court   (d) They should be transferred to different jurisdictions

17. What is one of the structural changes proposed by the National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms?
    (a) Abolishing lower courts   (b) Setting performance standards
    (c) Eliminating jury trials   (d) Mandating arbitration for all cases

18. According to the policy, how should litigation be managed?
    (a) In a fragmented manner   (b) With frequent delays
    (c) In a cohesive and coordinated manner (d) With minimal documentation

19. What does the policy say about attempts to mislead the court?
    (a) They are acceptable in certain cases (b) They should be avoided at all costs
    (c) They are necessary for winning   (d) They are only allowed for government cases

20. Which group does the policy specifically mention for emphasis in litigation prioritization?
    (a) Corporations   (b) Weaker sections   (c) Politicians   (d) Foreign nationals

2023 Military Gender Advocate Of Year Award

Why in News?

Major Radhika Sen, who served with United Nations Organisation Stabilisation Mission in Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), received 2023 United Nations Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award from UN Secretary – General Antonio Guterres on the occasion of International Day of UN Peacekeepers.

Explained:

The United Nations Peacekeeping mission is an international effort to help countries navigate the difficult path from conflict to peace. Established in 1948, these missions deploy military, police, and civilian personnel to conflict zones to maintain ceasefires, protect civilians, support the rule of law, and assist in the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of former combatants. Peacekeeping operations are guided by principles of consent of the parties, impartiality, and non-use of force except in self-defense and defense of the mandate.

India has been a significant contributor to UN peacekeeping missions since their inception. It is one of the largest troop-contributing countries, providing over 250,000 military and police personnel to 49 missions in more than 70 countries. Indian peacekeepers have been involved in critical operations in places like Congo, Sudan, Lebanon, and South Sudan. India's contributions are not limited to military support; it also provides medical care, engineering services, and other humanitarian assistance, reflecting its commitment to global peace and stability.

Way To marks -

She is 2ⁿᵈ Indian Peacekeeper to receive the prestigious award after Major Suman Gawani, who had served with UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and was honoured in 2019.

Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award

- Created in 2016
- Given By: Office of Military Affairs within Department for Peace Operations (UN)
- Recognises Efforts of a Military Peacekeeper in promoting Principles of 2000 Security Council Resolution.

> *Principles of 2000 Security Council Resolution*
>
> *Calls for Protecting Women and Girls from Conflict – related Sexual Violence and sets Gender – related Responsibilities for UN.*

India and Women in Peacekeeping

- India has deployed Female Engagement Teams in United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in Democratic Republic of Congo and United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei, which is 2ⁿᵈ Largest Women Contingent after Liberia (2007).

o In 2007, India became 1ˢᵗ Country to deploy an All – Women Contingent to a UN Peacekeeping Mission.

o Abyei Region is situated between Northern and Southern Sudan.

- With 124 Women Military Peacekeepers currently deployed, India is 11ᵗʰ Largest Contributor of Women Peacekeepers to UN.

- Dr Kiran Bedi: UN's 1ˢᵗ Police Adviser

Action for Peacekeeping (A4P) Initiative

- *Views Women, Peace and Security Agenda as Critical to enhancing Peacekeeping Operations' Performance through supporting Women's Full Participation in Peace Processes and making Peacekeeping more Gender – Responsive.*

- *Signed By: 152 Member States*

UN Peacekeeping

- Tool employed by United Nations to help Countries navigate the path from Conflict to Peace.

- Involves Deployment of Military, Police and Civilian Personnel to Regions affected by Conflicts or Political Instability.

- UN Peacekeeping Forces have an impressive record of peacekeeping achievements, including winning Nobel Peace Prize (1988).

- UN Peacekeepers are often referred to as Blue Berets or Blue Helmets.

India and UN Peacekeeping

- India's contribution to UN Peacekeeping began with its participation in UN Operation in Korea in 1950s.

- India is 5ᵗʰ Largest Troop Contributor (TCC) with 5,323 Personnel deployed in 8 out of 13 Active UN Peacekeeping Missions.

o India ranks 3ʳᵈ after Bangladesh (7,237) and Nepal (6,264) in Troops Contribution in Asia.

- India's Contribution to Peacekeeping Budget stands at 0.16%.

- India was 1ˢᵗ Country to contribute to Trust Fund on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, which was set up in 2016.

- In 2019, 150 Indian Peacekeepers serving with UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) have received Medals of Honour.

- In 2021, India, in collaboration with UN launched UNITE AWARE Platform.

- Indian Army has established Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping (CUNPK) in New Delhi.

- United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) is deployed in Jammu & Kashmir to supervise Ceasefire between India and Pakistan on 24 Jan of 1949.

International Day of UN Peacekeepers

- *UNGA designated 29 May as International Day of United Nations Peacekeepers.*

- *This is the date when in 1948, 1ˢᵗ UN Peacekeeping Mission named "United Nations Truce Supervision Organization", began operations in Palestine, to monitor Armistice Agreement between Israel and its Arab neighbours.*

- *Theme 2024: Fit for Future, Building Better Together*

Cyprus and UN Peacekeeping

- Cyprus has remained divided since 1974 Turkish Invasion, leading to a Tense Situation between Greek Cypriot south and Turkish Cypriot North.

- UN Peacekeepers (UNFICYP) have been deployed for 60 years to uphold Ceasefire and manage Buffer Zone that separates Two Sides.

- Cyprus gained Independence from Britain in 1960 with a Constitution aiming for Peace between Greek Cypriot Majority and Turkish Cypriot Minority.

- Inter – Communal Tensions escalated in 1963, leading to violence and Division of Capital, Nicosia, along "Green Line."

- United Nati ons Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) was established in 1964 to maintain Peace and has been present ever since, with UK as a Key Contributor.

- 1974 Turkish Invasion further divided Island, with Northern Part declaring Independence as Northern Cyprus (recognized only by Turkey).

Pepper it With

- War-torn African countries , Famous Peacekeeping missions of UN

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. When was the Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award created?
   (a) 2014   (b) 2015   (c) 2016   (d) 2017

2. Who was the first Indian peacekeeper to receive the Military Gender Advocate of the Year Award?
   (a) Dr. Kiran Bedi   (b) Major Suman Gawani
   (c) Major Suman Jethwani   (d) None of the above

3. In which year did India deploy its first all-women contingent to a UN Peacekeeping Mission?
   (a) 2005   (b) 2006   (c) 2007   (d) 2008

4. What is India's current ranking in terms of women military peacekeepers contribution to the UN?
   (a) 9th   (b) 10th   (c) 11th   (d) 12th

5. Who was the UN's first Police Adviser from India?
   (a) Major Suman Gawani   (b) Dr. Kiran Bedi
   (c) Vijay Laxmi Pandit   (d) Sushma Swaraj

6. In which year did UN Peacekeeping Forces win the Nobel Peace Prize?
   (a) 1978   (b) 1988   (c) 1998   (d) 2008

7. When did India's contribution to UN Peacekeeping begin?
   (a) 1940s   (b) 1950s   (c) 1960s   (d) 1970s

8. What is India's current ranking as a Troop Contributing Country (TCC) to UN Peacekeeping?
   (a) 3rd   (b) 4th   (c) 5th   (d) 6th

9. What percentage does India contribute to the UN Peacekeeping Budget?
   (a) 0.06%   (b) 0.16%   (c) 0.26%   (d) 0.36%

10. In which year was the Trust Fund on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse set up?
    (a) 2014   (b) 2015   (c) 2016   (d) 2017

11. What is the full form of CUNPK?
    (a) Central United Nations Peacekeeping   (b) Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping
    (c) Command for United Nations Peacekeeping   (d) Council for United Nations Peacekeeping

12. When was UNMOGIP deployed in Jammu & Kashmir?
    (a) 24 Jan 1947   (b) 24 Jan 1948   (c) 24 Jan 1949   (d) 24 Jan 1950

13. In which year did Cyprus gain independence from Britain?
    (a) 1958 (b) 1959 (c) 1960 (d) 1961

14. When was UNFICYP established?
    (a) 1962 (b) 1963 (c) 1964 (d) 1965

15. What is the name of the dividing line in Nicosia?
    (a) Blue Line (b) Red Line (c) Yellow Line (d) Green Line

16. In which year did the Turkish invasion of Cyprus occur?
    (a) 1972 (b) 1973 (c) 1974 (d) 1975

17. How many active UN Peacekeeping Missions is India currently participating in?
    (a) 6 (b) 7 (c) 8 (d) 9

18. Which country contributes the most troops to UN Peacekeeping in Asia?
    (a) India (b) Bangladesh (c) Nepal (d) Pakistan

19. What is the full form of UNMISS?
    (a) United Nations Mission in South Sudan (b) United Nations Military Service in Sudan
    (c) United Nations Mandate for South Sudan (d) United Nations Monitoring in South Sudan

20. Which platform did India launch in collaboration with the UN in 2021?
    (a) UNITE AWARE (b) PEACE AWARE
    (c) MISSION AWARE (d) GLOBAL AWARE

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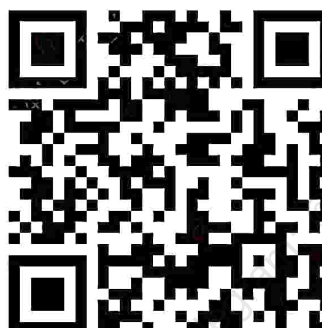
BRICS Grouping and its Expansion

Why in News?

BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs / International Relations met in Russian Federation.

Russia took over Chairmanship of BRICS on Jan 1, 2024.

Explained:

BRICS is an economic bloc comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. Established in 2009, BRICS aims to enhance cooperation in various sectors such as trade, investment, technology, and politics among its member countries. These nations represent a significant portion of the world's population and economic output, making BRICS a crucial player in global affairs.

In the current world context, BRICS holds relevance as a counterbalance to Western economic dominance, particularly that of the G7 countries. The bloc advocates for a multipolar world, promoting equitable development and reform in international financial institutions like the IMF and World Bank. Additionally, BRICS addresses issues such as sustainable development, climate change, and poverty alleviation. By fostering collaboration among major emerging economies, BRICS contributes to global stability and economic diversification, challenging the traditional power dynamics in international relations.

Way to marks:

Meeting was 1st Ministerial Meeting following BRICS Expansion in 2023.

When Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and UAE joined Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa as Full – fledged BRICS Members.

BRICS

- BRICS is an acronym for Grouping of World's Leading Emerging Economies, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

- In 2001, British Economist Jim O'Neill coined the term BRIC to describe 4 Emerging Economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China.

- BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) Countries met for 1st time in St. Petersburg (Russia) on the margins of G8 Outreach Summit in July 2006.

- BRIC Group was renamed as BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) after South Africa was accepted as a Full Member at BRIC Foreign Ministers' meeting in New York in 2010.

- Johannesburg Declaration, 2023 issued after the summit, said Argentina, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates had been invited to become Full Members from Jan 1, 2024.

- BRICS (prior to expansion) represented 41% of Global Population, 24% of Global GDP and 16 % of Global Trade.

- 1st BRIC Summit was held in Russia in 2009.

  o Since 2009, its summits are held annually.

  o In 2015, Ufa Declaration of BRICS was adopted at 7th BRICS Summit held in Ufa, Russia.

    ▪ It covers a range of topics, including Global Governance, International Security and Economic Cooperation.

  o 13th BRICS Summit was held under India's Chairmanship in 2021.

    ▪ India has hosted BRICS Summits twice before in 2012 and 2016.

  o 14th BRICS Summit was convened under Chairmanship of China in 2022.

    ▪ Beijing Declaration was adopted, where it was declared that BRICS Countries support talks between Russia and Ukraine.

  o 15th BRICS Summit was held in Johannesburg (South Africa) in 2023.

    ▪ Theme: "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development and Inclusive Multilateralism".

    ▪ Gifts from India: Bidri Surahi, Nagaland Shawl and Gond Paintings.

Key Initiatives of BRICS

- New Development Bank (HQ: Shanghai): To mobilize Resources for Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

  o Fortaleza Declaration: During 6th BRICS Summit in Fortaleza (2014), BRICS Leaders signed Agreement establishing New Development Bank (NDB).

  o Fully Operational in 2016.

  o Each Member holds an Equal Amount of Shares (20%) in NDB.

- BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement 2015: To stop Short – Term Liquidity Crises and further strengthen Financial Stability.

  o Legal Basis for Establishment was signed at Fortaleza, Brazil, in 2014.

  o CRA's Total Lending Capacity is $100 Billion.

- BRICS Payments Task Force: Cooperation on National Payments Systems and Alternative to SWIFT Payment System.

Country	Capital contribution (Billion USD)	Access to Funds (Billion USD)	Voting Rights(%)
China	41	21	39.95
Brazil	18	18	18.10
India	18	18	18.10
Russia	18	18	18.10
South Africa	5	10	5.75

VISUALIZING THE 2023
BRICS EXPANSION

BRICS, a bloc of developing countries formed in 2010, is set to welcome six new members at the beginning of 2024.

▲ Members ▲ New Members △ Applied for membership

RUSSIA

SAUDI ARABIA
EGYPT

CHINA

INDIA

IRAN
UAE

ETHIOPIA
China has provided Ethiopia with billions in financing to construct major infrastructure projects.

BRAZIL

ARGENTINA
Argentina is a major producer of lithium, a critical metal for the clean energy transition.

SOUTH AFRICA
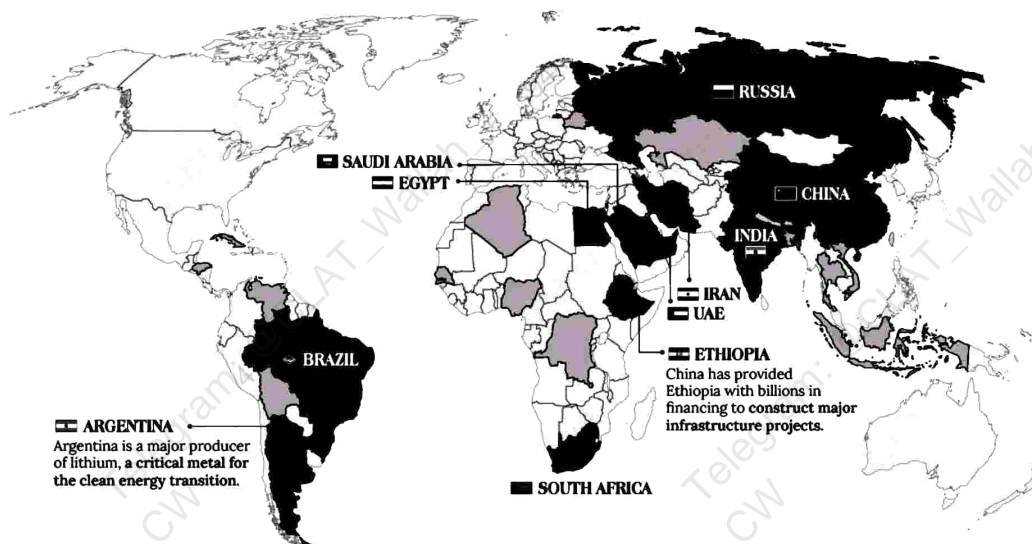
SHARE OF GLOBAL

GDP 2023 EoY PROJECTION — BRICS total with new members
3.6% 18.4%
29% Saudi Arabia is the only trillion-dollar economy being added to BRICS.

POPULATION 2023
17.8% 17.7%
46% Adding high-population-growth countries like Ethiopia means BRICS could soon represent over half the world's population.

OIL PRODUCTION 2022
11.9% 12.9% 4.1% 4.3%
43% The addition of Saudi Arabia, Iran, and the UAE will more than double BRICS' share of global oil production.
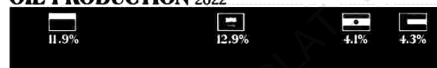
EXPORTS OF GOODS 2022
14.4%
25% BRICS' share of global exports will increase slightly, continuing to be led by China.

Pepper it With

● QUAD grouping and relevance , India China Relations and BRICS.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Who coined the term BRIC in 2001?
   (a) Jim O'Neill   (b) Vladimir Putin   (c) Xi Jinping   (d) Narendra Modi

2. When did the first BRIC summit take place?
   (a) 2001   (b) 2006   (c) 2009   (d) 2010

3. Which country joined BRIC to make it BRICS?
   (a) South Africa   (b) Singapore   (c) Saudi Arabia   (d) Spain

4. Where is the headquarters of the New Development Bank?
   (a) Beijing   (b) Moscow   (c) New Delhi   (d) Shanghai

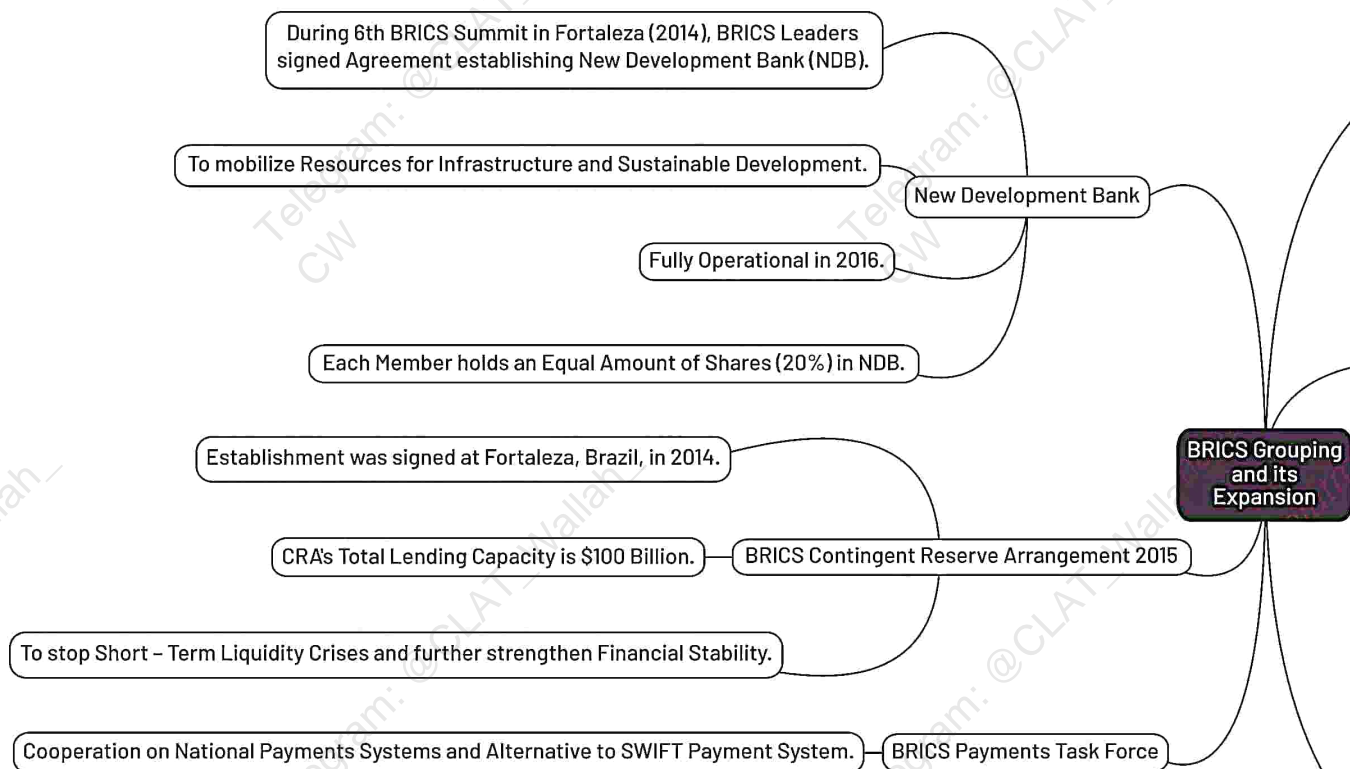5. What percentage of global GDP did BRICS represent before expansion?
   (a) 16%   (b) 24%   (c) 41%   (d) 50%

6. In which year did South Africa become a full member of BRICS?
   (a) 2009   (b) 2010   (c) 2014   (d) 2015

7. What was the theme of the 15th BRICS Summit in 2023?
   (a) "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Growth"
   (b) "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development and Inclusive Multilateralism"
   (c) "BRICS: Towards a Sustainable Future"
   (d) "BRICS: Economic Cooperation in a Changing World"

8. Which declaration was adopted at the 7th BRICS Summit in 2015?
   (a) Beijing Declaration   (b) Fortaleza Declaration
   (c) Ufa Declaration   (d) Johannesburg Declaration

9. What is the total lending capacity of the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement?
   (a) $50 Billion   (b) $100 Billion   (c) $150 Billion   (d) $200 Billion

10. In which year did the New Development Bank become fully operational?
    (a) 2014   (b) 2015   (c) 2016   (d) 2017

11. How many times has India hosted the BRICS Summit?
    (a) Once   (b) Twice   (c) Thrice   (d) Four times

During 6th BRICS Summit in Fortaleza (2014), BRICS Leaders signed Agreement establishing New Development Bank (NDB).

To mobilize Resources for Infrastructure and Sustainable Development.

New Development Bank

Fully Operational in 2016.

Each Member holds an Equal Amount of Shares (20%) in NDB.

Establishment was signed at Fortaleza, Brazil, in 2014.

CRA's Total Lending Capacity is $100 Billion.

BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement 2015

BRICS Grouping and its Expansion

To stop Short – Term Liquidity Crises and further strengthen Financial Stability.

Cooperation on National Payments Systems and Alternative to SWIFT Payment System.

BRICS Payments Task Force

Scan the code to download the answer key of this month's magazine.

Why in News? — BRICS Ministers of Foreign Affairs / International Relations met in Russian Federation. Meeting was 1st Ministerial Meeting following BRICS Expansion in 2023.

BRICS
- Acronym for Grouping of World's Leading Emerging Economies, namely Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.
- In 2001, British Economist Jim O'Neill coined the term BRIC to describe 4 Emerging Economies of Brazil, Russia, India and China.
- Represents 41% of Global Population, 24% of Global GDP and 16 % of Global Trade.
- BRIC Countries met for 1st time in St. Petersburg (Russia) on the margins of G8 Outreach Summit in July 2006.
- Renamed as BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) after South Africa was accepted as a Full Member at BRIC Foreign Ministers' meeting in New York in 2010.

BRICS Summits
- 1st BRIC Summit was held in Russia in 2009.
- 13th BRICS Summit was held under India's Chairmanship in 2021. — India has hosted BRICS Summits twice before in 2012 and 2016.
- 14th BRICS Summit was convened under Chairmanship of China in 2022.
- 15th BRICS Summit was held in Johannesburg (South Africa) in 2023.
  - Theme: "BRICS and Africa: Partnership for Mutually Accelerated Growth, Sustainable Development and Inclusive Multilateralism".
  - Gifts from India: Bidri Surahi, Nagaland Shawl and Gond Paintings.

12. Which of the following is NOT a gift from India mentioned in the 15th BRICS Summit?
    (a) Bidri Surahi   (b) Nagaland Shawl   (c) Gond Paintings   (d) Kashmir Pashmina

13. Where was the first BRIC meeting held in 2006?
    (a) New York   (b) St. Petersburg   (c) Beijing   (d) Brasília

14. What percentage of global trade did BRICS represent before expansion?
    (a) 16%   (b) 24%   (c) 41%   (d) 50%

15. Which declaration supported talks between Russia and Ukraine?
    (a) Ufa Declaration   (b) Fortaleza Declaration
    (c) Beijing Declaration   (d) Johannesburg Declaration

16. In which year was the BRICS Contingent Reserve Arrangement established?
    (a) 2014   (b) 2015   (c) 2016   (d) 2017

17. What is the purpose of the BRICS Payments Task Force?
    (a) To establish a common currency
    (b) To create an alternative to the SWIFT payment system
    (c) To regulate cryptocurrency within BRICS nations
    (d) To implement a universal basic income

18. Which country chaired the 14th BRICS Summit in 2022?
    (a) Brazil   (b) Russia   (c) India   (d) China

19. How many countries were invited to become full members of BRICS from January 1, 2024?
    (a) 4   (b) 5   (c) 6   (d) 7

20. What percentage of shares does each member hold in the New Development Bank?
    (a) 10%   (b) 15%   (c) 20%   (d) 25%

50th Group of Seven (G7) Summit

Why in News?

G7 Summit 2024 will take place from June 13 – 15 in Puglia (Apulia, Italy).

Explained:

The Group of Seven (G7) is an intergovernmental organization consisting of the world's seven largest advanced economies: the United States, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United Kingdom. Established in the 1970s, the G7 meets annually to discuss and coordinate economic policies, address global financial issues, and tackle international crises. The group's agenda includes topics such as trade, security, climate change, and global health.

The relevance of the G7 lies in its collective economic influence and its role in shaping global policies. Despite criticisms for its exclusion of emerging economies, the G7 remains a significant forum for collaboration among major democratic nations. Its decisions and initiatives can impact global markets, international relations, and development agendas, making it a crucial player in addressing contemporary global challenges.

Way to marks:

Theme 2024: Building a Resilient and Inclusive Global Economy

49th G7 Summit 2023 was held in Hiroshima (Japan).

Canada will next host G7 Summit in 2025 in Kananaskis, Alberta.

Key Outcomes and Agenda

- **Extraordinary Revenue Acceleration (ERA) Loans for Ukraine**
  - To make available approximately $50 billion in Additional Funding to Ukraine by the end of the year 2024.

- **Mattei Plan**
  - Named after Enrico Mattei (Founder of Italian Oil Giant Eni)
  - Development Initiative unveiled by Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, focusing on partnerships with African nations.
  - Plan targets International Development with a focus on Energy, Growth and Immigration.
  - Italy will give Grants and Loans worth 5.5bn Euros (£4.6bn) to Several African Countries, to help develop their Economies.

> **Invitee Countries**
> Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, India, Jordan, Kenya, Mauritania, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Ukraine, Vatican City (Pope Francis: 1st Pontiff to participate in a G7 Meeting)

> **Invitee Institutions**
> African Development Bank (Akinwumi Adesina), International Monetary Fund (Kristalina Georgieva), OECD (Mathias Cormann), United Nations (Antònio Guterres), World Bank (Ajay Banga)

- **Promotion to Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII)**
  - Mobilize up to USD 600 billion through PGII by 2027.
    - Launched by US and G7 Allies at 48th G7 Summit in 2022 in Germany.
- **Promotion to India – Middle East – Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)**
  - Signed at G20 Summit in New Delhi in 2023.
  - Forms Part of PGII.
    - East Corridor: Connecting India to Arabian Gulf
    - Northern Corridor: Connecting Gulf to Europe.
  - Signatories: India, US, Saudi Arabia, UAE, European Union, Italy, France and Germany.


India-Middle East-Europe Corridor (IMEC)
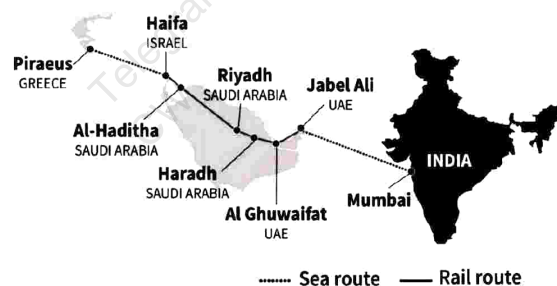
- **G7 Apulia Food Systems Initiative**: To intensify efforts to Overcome Structural Barriers to Food Security and Nutrition.

- **Artificial Intelligence**: Announced to develop a brand to support implementation of International Code of Conduct for Organizations Developing Advanced AI Systems.
  - Safety of AI was raised at 2023 Summit in Japan and resulted in Hiroshima AI Process.

- **Support to Infrastructure Projects**: G7 also extended support for Lobito Corridor in Central Africa and Luzon Corridor and Middle Corridor.
  - Lobito Corridor: Extends from Port City of Lobito on Atlantic Coast of Angola through Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and into Zambia.
  - Luzon Corridor: Located on Island of Luzon in Philippines.
    - Luzon is Largest and Most Populous Island in Philippines.
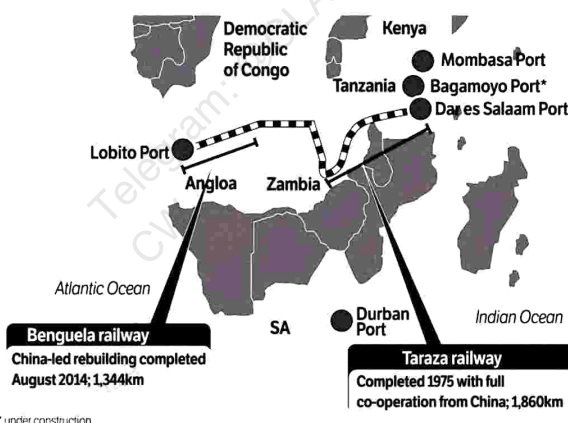
- Middle Corridor: Referred to as Trans – Caspian International Transport Route (TITR), a vital logistics and transportation network connecting Europe and Asia.

The Middle Corridor

- **Stopping War in Gaza**: G7 will also Focus on Middle East, particularly Gaza Conflict.

- **Climate Change**: G7 aims for $40-42\%$ Emission reduction by 2030.

G7 Summit

- Type: Inter – Governmental Political and Economic Forum.

- Established in 1975.
  - As a platform for Economic and Financial Cooperation in response to 1973 Energy Crisis.

- Function: To discuss and coordinate Economic Policies.

- 1st Summit was held in 1975 in Rambouillet (France).

- Members: Italy, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, United Kingdom and United States of America.
  - Canada joined G7 in 1976.
  - European Union also participates in the Summit.
    - European Union began attending in 1977.
  - Expanded into G8 between 1997 and 2013, with inclusion of Russia.
    - However, Russia's Participation was Suspended in 2014 following Annexation of Crimea.

- G7 group controls 60% of Global Net Wealth, drives 46% of Global GDP, Represents 10% of World's Population.

- Does not have a Permanent Administrative Structure.

- Decisions taken during Annual Summits are Non – Binding.

> *India and G7*
> - *India is Not a Member of G7.*
> - *India participated as a Guest in 2019, 2021 and 2022 G7 Summits at invitation of France, UK and Germany, respectively.*
> - *With a GDP of USD 3.57 Trillion (Nominal), India's Economy is Larger than Four G7 Member Countries – France, Italy, UK, Canada.*

Oil Crisis of 1973 – 74

- Refers to a Period of Sudden Surge in Oil Prices, accompanied by a Decrease in Supply which has Destabilised Global Economy.

- **Trigger**

  - Yom Kippur War (Oct 1973): Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel.
    - United States intervened by resupplying Israeli Military during the conflict.
  - OPEC's Political Leverage: Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), consisting of Major Oil – Producing Nations, decided to use Oil as a Political Weapon in response.

> *Related Facts*
> - *In Bretton Woods System, Value of US Dollar was fixed against Gold.*
> - *It required Countries to guarantee Convertibility of their Currencies into US Dollars to within 1% of Fixed Parity Rates.*

- **OPEC's Actions**
o   Oil Embargo: OPEC, particularly its Arab Members, imposed an Oil Embargo on Countries that supported Israel, including United States and Some European Nations.
o   Production Cuts: OPEC also Reduced Overall Oil Production, further tightening the supply.
- **Impact**
    o   Supply Shortage: Embargo and Production Cuts led to a Global Oil Shortage.
    o   Price Hike: With Reduced Oil Availability, Prices Heavily Increased (from USD 3 to USD 11).
    o   Economic Downturn: Higher Oil Prices had a Cascading Effect.
        - Transportation Costs Increased, Raising Prices of Goods and Services.
        - This fuelled Inflation and Economic Stagnation in Many Countries.
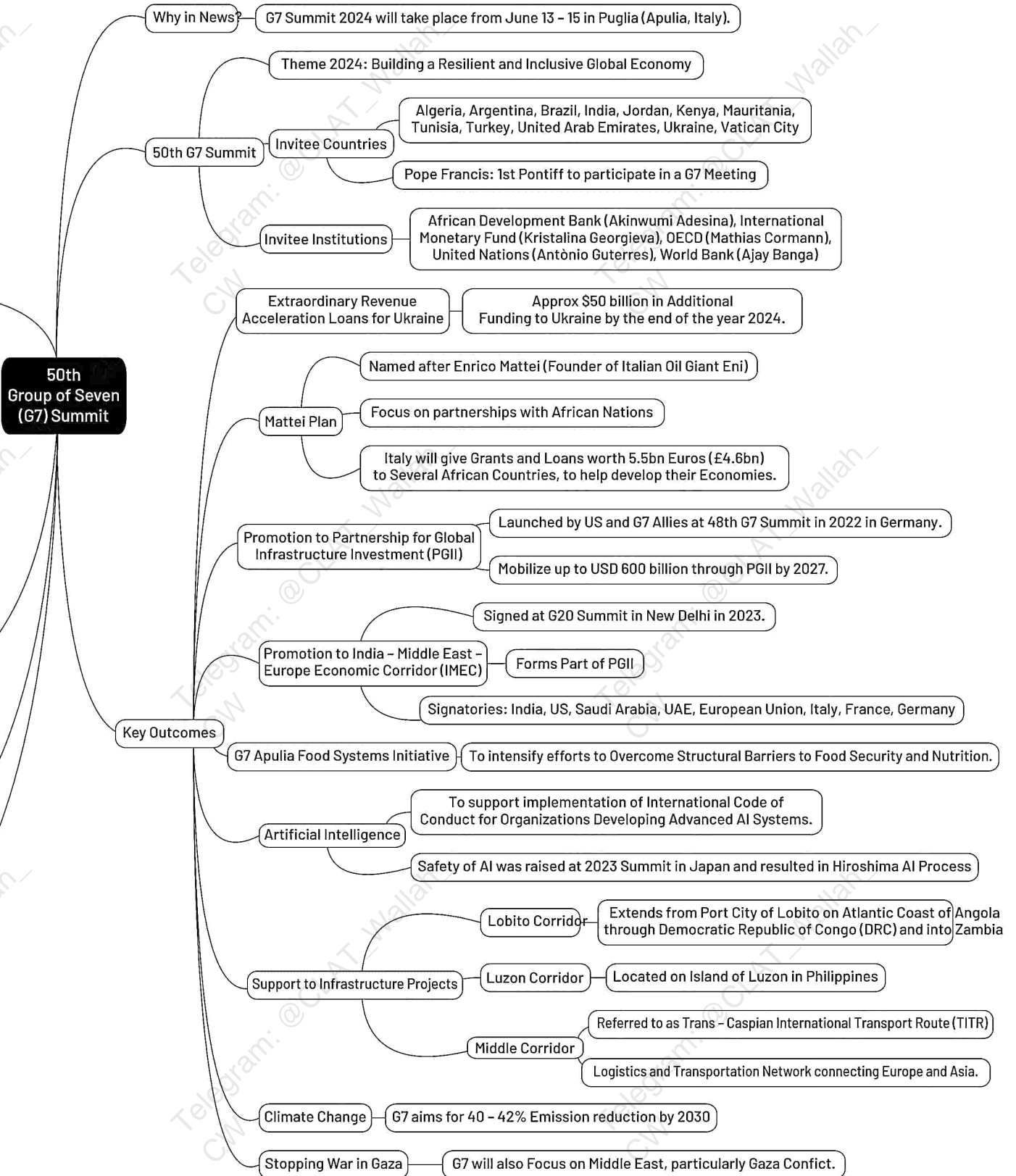
Pepper it With
- G7 and G8 controversy, G-77 and India.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What is the theme for the 2024 G7 Summit?
    (a) Advancing Global Peace
    (b) Building a Resilient and Inclusive Global Economy
    (c) Combating Climate Change
    (d) Promoting Digital Innovation

2. Where will the G7 Summit be held in 2025?
    (a) Hiroshima, Japan
    (b) Berlin, Germany
    (c) Kananaskis, Alberta, Canada
    (d) Washington D.C., USA

3. How much additional funding is planned to be made available to Ukraine by the end of 2024?
    (a) $25 billion
    (b) $40 billion
    (c) $50 billion
    (d) $60 billion

4. The Mattei Plan, unveiled by Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, focuses on partnerships with which continent?
    (a) Asia
    (b) Africa
    (c) South America
    (d) Australia

5. How much funding does the Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII) aim to mobilize by 2027?
    (a) $400 billion
    (b) $500 billion
    (c) $600 billion
    (d) $700 billion

6. Which of the following is NOT a signatory to the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)?
    (a) India
    (b) Saudi Arabia
    (c) Russia
    (d) European Union

7. What is the G7's emission reduction target by 2030?
    (a) 30-32%
    (b) 35-37%
    (c) 40-42%
    (d) 45-47%

8. In which year was the G7 established?
    (a) 1970
    (b) 1973
    (c) 1975
    (d) 1977

9. Which country joined the G7 in 1976?
    (a) Italy
    (b) Canada
    (c) Japan
    (d) Russia

10. What percentage of global net wealth does the G7 group control?
    (a) 40%
    (b) 50%
    (c) 60%
    (d) 70%

11. Which event triggered the 1973 Energy Crisis?
    (a) Vietnam War
    (b) Cuban Missile Crisis
    (c) Yom Kippur War
    (d) Iranian Revolution

G7 Summit

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- Established in 1975
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- Function: To discuss and coordinate Economic Policies
- Members: Italy, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, United Kingdom and United States of America.
  - Canada joined G7 in 1976.
  - European Union began attending in 1977.
  - Expanded into G8 between 1997 and 2013, with inclusion of Russia.
  - Russia's Participation was Suspended in 2014 following Annexation of Crimea
- Represents 60% of Global Net Wealth, 46% of Global GDP, 10% of World's Population.
- 1st Summit was held in 1975 in Rambouillet (France).
- 49th G7 Summit 2023 was held in Hiroshima (Japan).
- Canada will next host G7 Summit in 2025 in Kananaskis, Alberta.
- Does not have a Permanent Administrative Structure.
- Decisions taken during Annual Summits are Non – Binding.

Oil Crisis of 1973 – 74

- Refers to a Period of Sudden Surge in Oil Prices, accompanied by a Decrease in Supply which has Destabilised Global Economy
- Trigger
  - Yom Kippur War (Oct 1973): Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel.
  - United States intervened by resupplying Israeli Military during the conflict.
- OPEC's Actions
  - Oil Embargo: OPEC, particularly its Arab Members, imposed an Oil Embargo on Countries that supported Israel, including United States and Some European Nations.
  - Production Cuts: OPEC also Reduced Overall Oil Production, further tightening the supply

India and G7

- Guest in 2019, 2021 and 2022 G7 Summits at invitation of France, UK and Germany, respectively.
- With a GDP of USD 3.57 Trillion (Nominal), India's Economy is Larger than Four G7 Member Countries – France, Italy, UK, Canada.

Related Facts

- In Bretton Woods System, Value of US Dollar was fixed against Gold.
- It required Countries to guarantee Convertibility of their Currencies into US Dollars to within 1% of Fixed Parity Rates.

Why in News? — G7 Summit 2024 will take place from June 13 – 15 in Puglia (Apulia, Italy).

50th G7 Summit

Theme 2024: Building a Resilient and Inclusive Global Economy

Invitee Countries
- Algeria, Argentina, Brazil, India, Jordan, Kenya, Mauritania, Tunisia, Turkey, United Arab Emirates, Ukraine, Vatican City
- Pope Francis: 1st Pontiff to participate in a G7 Meeting

Invitee Institutions — African Development Bank (Akinwumi Adesina), International Monetary Fund (Kristalina Georgieva), OECD (Mathias Cormann), United Nations (Antònio Guterres), World Bank (Ajay Banga)

50th Group of Seven (G7) Summit

Key Outcomes

Extraordinary Revenue Acceleration Loans for Ukraine — Approx $50 billion in Additional Funding to Ukraine by the end of the year 2024.

Mattei Plan
- Named after Enrico Mattei (Founder of Italian Oil Giant Eni)
- Focus on partnerships with African Nations
- Italy will give Grants and Loans worth 5.5bn Euros (£4.6bn) to Several African Countries, to help develop their Economies.

Promotion to Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment (PGII)
- Launched by US and G7 Allies at 48th G7 Summit in 2022 in Germany.
- Mobilize up to USD 600 billion through PGII by 2027.

Promotion to India – Middle East – Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC)
- Signed at G20 Summit in New Delhi in 2023.
- Forms Part of PGII
- Signatories: India, US, Saudi Arabia, UAE, European Union, Italy, France, Germany

G7 Apulia Food Systems Initiative — To intensify efforts to Overcome Structural Barriers to Food Security and Nutrition.

Artificial Intelligence
- To support implementation of International Code of Conduct for Organizations Developing Advanced AI Systems.
- Safety of AI was raised at 2023 Summit in Japan and resulted in Hiroshima AI Process

Support to Infrastructure Projects
- **Lobito Corridor** — Extends from Port City of Lobito on Atlantic Coast of Angola through Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and into Zambia
- **Luzon Corridor** — Located on Island of Luzon in Philippines
- **Middle Corridor**
  - Referred to as Trans – Caspian International Transport Route (TITR)
  - Logistics and Transportation Network connecting Europe and Asia.

Climate Change — G7 aims for 40 – 42% Emission reduction by 2030

Stopping War in Gaza — G7 will also Focus on Middle East, particularly Gaza Conflict.

12. What was the price increase of oil during the 1973 Energy Crisis?
    (a) From $1 to $5   (b) From $2 to $8   (c) From $3 to $11   (d) From $5 to $15

13. Which corridor extends from the port city of Lobito on the Atlantic coast of Angola?
    (a) Luzon Corridor   (b) Middle Corridor   (c) Lobito Corridor   (d) East Corridor

14. Where was the first G7 Summit held in 1975?
    (a) London, UK   (b) Rambouillet, France
    (c) Rome, Italy   (d) Washington D.C., USA

15. Which country's participation in the G8 was suspended in 2014?
    (a) China   (b) India   (c) Russia   (d) Brazil

16. The Luzon Corridor is located in which country?
    (a) Indonesia   (b) Malaysia   (c) Philippines   (d) Vietnam

17. What does PGII stand for?
    (a) Partnership for Global Infrastructure Investment
    (b) Program for Global Industrial Integration
    (c) Plan for Governmental International Intervention
    (d) Protocol for Global Investment Initiatives

18. How much funding has Italy pledged to African countries under the Mattei Plan?
    (a) 3.5 billion Euros   (b) 4.5 billion Euros   (c) 5.5 billion Euros   (d) 6.5 billion Euros

19. What percentage of the world's population does the G7 represent?
    (a) 5%   (b) 10%   (c) 15%   (d) 20%

20. Which of the following is also known as the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route (TITR)?
    (a) Northern Corridor   (b) East Corridor   (c) Lobito Corridor   (d) Middle Corridor

Swiss Peace Summit

Why in News?

2-Day Summit on Peace in Ukraine at Bürgenstock Resort in Switzerland concluded with hopes for an end to Russia-Ukraine War.

Explained:

The Russia-Ukraine war, which began in February 2022, involves Russia's large-scale invasion of Ukraine. The conflict stems from long-standing political and territorial disputes, particularly over Ukraine's move towards Western alliances and Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. The war has resulted in widespread destruction, significant civilian casualties, and a humanitarian crisis, drawing international condemnation and support for Ukraine from Western nations.

The war has severely impacted global stability, causing economic disruptions, energy crises, and geopolitical tensions. Sanctions against Russia and military aid to Ukraine have escalated the conflict, with significant implications for international law, human rights, and global security. The ongoing Summit is an effort for the ending the conflict in long term and making a peace agreement between both the sections of society.

Way to marks:

They supported Final Joint Communiqué that outlined a "Path to Peace" and focused on 3 Agendas: Nuclear Safety, Global Food Security and Humanitarian Issues.

Swiss Peace Summit

- Also known as Summit on Peace in Ukraine.

- Aimed at Addressing and Finding Solutions to Ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine.

- Venue: Bürgenstock Resort (Switzerland)

- Objective: To facilitate Dialogue and Negotiations aimed at ending War between Russia and Ukraine.

- Participants: 100 Attending Delegations

Key Outcome of Swiss Peace Summit

- **Joint Communique on a Peace Framework**: Final Joint Communiqué was issued, supported by 80 Countries & 4 Organizations out of 100 Attending Delegations.
  - This document outlines Collective Consensus and Recommendations for achieving Peace between Russia and Ukraine.

- **Territorial Integrity of Ukraine**: Territorial Integrity of Ukraine should be Basis for Any Peace Agreement to end Russia's War.

- **Nuclear Safety**: Ensuring Safe Operation of Ukraine's Nuclear Power Plants, including Zaporizhzhia, under Ukraine's Sovereign Control and in line with IAEA Principles.
  - Any Threat or Use of Nuclear Weapons in conflict is Unacceptable.

> ***India's Stand at Summit***
> - *India was represented by Secretary (West) in Ministry of External Affairs.*
> - *New Delhi sent NSA and Deputy NSA to 2 Preparatory Conferences in Jeddah and Davos.*
> - *India decided to Not Sign the Joint Communique by saying that Only those options acceptable to Both Parties can lead to abiding Peace.*

- **Global Food Security**: Emphasising Importance of Uninterrupted Food Production and Supply, Safe Navigation and Access to Sea Ports.
  - Attacks on Merchant Ships and Port Infrastructure are Unacceptable.
  - Ukrainian Agricultural Products should be freely provided to Other Countries.

- **Humanitarian Issues**: Calling for Release of All Prisoners of War through Complete Exchange
  - Return of All Unlawfully Displaced Ukrainian Children and Civilians.

Related Facts

- Russia was Not Invited by Host, Switzerland, due to International Criminal Court's Indictment of President Vladimir Putin.
  - Additionally, Moscow has accused Switzerland of losing its Neutrality by aligning with EU Sanctions.

- China declined the invitation, not even send a delegation.

- Besides India; Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Thailand, Indonesia, Mexico and UAE were among Countries Participating at Summit on Peace for Ukraine but did Not Sign a Final Communique.

- Brazil, which was listed as an Observer on List of Attendees, also did Not Feature as a Signatory.

Peace Efforts So Far

- **Ukrainian 10 – Point Peace Plan**
  - o Promoted by President of Ukraine since 2023 G-20 Summit.
  - o Withdrawal of Russian Troops from Ukrainian Territory.
  - o Restoration of Ukraine's Territorial Integrity.
  - o Prosecution of War Crimes committed by Russia.

- **Minsk Agreements, 2015**
  - o Signed in 2014 and 2015 in Belarusian capital Minsk.
  - o Discussed and Agreed upon with involvement and support of France, Germany, Organization for Security and Co – operation in Europe (OSCE).
  - o Signed by Ukraine, Russia and Representative of OSCE.
  - o Aimed to end Initial Phase of Conflict in Eastern Ukraine.
  - o Ceasefire between Ukrainian Forces and Pro – Russian Separatists.
  - o Withdrawal of Heavy Weaponry from Conflict Zone.
  - o Full Ukrainian Government Control over Eastern Donbas Region.

> *History of Swiss Mediation*
> - *Looked after interests of both Kingdom of Bavaria and Grand Duchy of Baden during Franco – Prussian War of 1870 – 71.*
> - *Represented India's interests in Pakistan and Pakistan's in India between 1971 and 1976.*
> - *Protecting Power between Saudi Arabia and Iran, US and Iran, Russia and Georgian.*
> - *Hosted talks b/w Government in Colombo and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in 2006.*

- **Russia 12-Point Plan**
  - o Russia rejected Ukrainian Plan; however, it supports Chinese 12-Point Plan.
  - o Focuses on Hostilities and Protecting Civilians but makes No Mention of Russia Returning Territory.
  - o Stressed that "Security of a Region should Not be achieved by Strengthening or Expanding Military Blocs", indirectly referring to NATO Expansion.
  - o Russia has maintained its aims of "Denazification, Demilitarisation, and Neutral Status" of Ukraine.

Pepper it With
- NATO and CSTO ,Non Alignment movement.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Where was the Swiss Peace Summit held?
    (a) Geneva   (b) Zurich
    (c) Bürgenstock Resort   (d) Lausanne

2. How many delegations attended the Swiss Peace Summit?
    (a) 80   (b) 90   (c) 100   (d) 110

3. How many countries and organizations supported the final Joint Communiqué?
    (a) 74   (b) 80   (c) 84   (d) 90

4. Which country was not invited to the Swiss Peace Summit?
    (a) Ukraine   (b) Russia   (c) China   (d) India

5. Which country declined the invitation to the Swiss Peace Summit?
    (a) USA   (b) China   (c) Germany   (d) France

6. Which of the following countries did not sign the final communique?
    (a) UK   (b) France   (c) India   (d) Germany

7. What is one of the key focuses of the "Path to Peace" outlined in the Joint Communiqué?
    (a) Economic sanctions   (b) Military intervention
    (c) Nuclear safety   (d) Cybersecurity

8. According to the communique, under whose control should Ukraine's nuclear power plants operate?
    (a) Russia's   (b) Ukraine's   (c) IAEA's   (d) UN's

9. What does the communique state about the use of nuclear weapons in the conflict?
    (a) It's a last resort   (b) It's acceptable under certain conditions
    (c) It's unacceptable   (d) It's not mentioned

10. What humanitarian issue does the communique address?
    (a) Refugee resettlement   (b) Medical aid distribution
    (c) Release of prisoners of war   (d) Economic aid

11. How many points are in the Ukrainian Peace Plan?
    (a) 8   (b) 10   (c) 12   (d) 15

12. Where were the Minsk Agreements signed?
    (a) Moscow   (b) Kiev   (c) Minsk   (d) Warsaw

13. Which organization was involved in the Minsk Agreements?
    (a) NATO   (b) EU   (c) OSCE   (d) UN

14. How many points are in Russia's supported peace plan?
    (a) 8   (b) 10   (c) 12   (d) 15

15. What does Russia's plan indirectly refer to when mentioning "strengthening or expanding military blocs"?
    (a) EU expansion   (b) NATO expansion (c) UN peacekeeping   (d) OSCE involvement

16. Which of the following is NOT one of Russia's stated aims for Ukraine?
    (a) Denazification   (b) Demilitarisation (c) Neutral status   (d) EU membership

17. In which year were the Minsk Agreements signed?
    (a) 2013   (b) 2014   (c) 2015   (d) 2016

18. Which of the following is NOT mentioned as a key outcome of the Swiss Peace Summit?
    (a) Territorial integrity of Ukraine   (b) Nuclear safety
    (c) Global food security   (d) Arms reduction

19. According to the communique, what should be freely provided to other countries?
    (a) Russian natural gas   (b) Ukrainian agricultural products
    (c) European manufactured goods   (d) American technology

20. Why did Russia accuse Switzerland of losing its neutrality?
    (a) Hosting the peace summit   (b) Aligning with EU sanctions
    (c) Supporting Ukraine militarily   (d) Joining NATO

RBI Surplus Transfer to Government

Why in News?

Reserve Bank of India approves Surplus Transfer of Rs 2.11 lakh Crore to Government for FY24. Transfer (140% Higher than Last Year's Rs 87416 Crore) is based on Revised Economic Capital Framework (ECF). RBI has also decided to increase Contingency Risk Buffer to 6.5% for FY 2023 – 24 from 6%.

Explained:

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) transfers its surplus profits to the Government of India annually. This surplus includes earnings from various sources such as interest on government securities, management of currency, and foreign exchange operations. The transfer is vital for the government as it supplements its revenue and helps in funding various developmental and social programs.

This surplus transfer strengthens the government's fiscal position, reducing the need for additional borrowing. However, it also raises concerns about the RBI's financial autonomy and the adequacy of its reserves. Ensuring a balance between supporting government finances and maintaining the RBI's financial health is crucial for economic stability.

Way to marks:

Surplus Transfer and ECF

- Every year, RBI pays a Dividend to Government to help with Government's Finances from its Surplus Profit.
  - Section 47 of RBI Act 1934 mandates that Any Profits made by RBI from its operations be sent to Centre.

- ECF provides a Methodology for determining Appropriate Level of Risk Provisions and Profit Distribution to be made under Section 47 of RBI Act 1934.
  - RBI constituted a Committee headed by Bimal Jalan to review 2015 – 16 ECF in 2018.
    - RBI also has to maintain a CRB within a range of 6.5% to 5.5% of RBI's Balance Sheet.
  - RBI Board's Technical Committee, led by Y H Malegam in 2013, recommended Higher Transfer of Reserves and Surplus to Government, which typically Averages around 0.5% of Gross Domestic Product.

> ### *Surplus*
> *Net Income derived from Total Income minus Total Expenditure.*
> - *30%: Recovery and Reconstruction Efforts.*
> - *10%: Preparedness and Capacity-building Initiatives.*

Contingency Risk Buffer

Fund kept for Unforeseen Contingencies like Depreciation of Securities Values, Risks from Monetary Rate Policy, etc.

How RBI earn its Profit?

- *Open Market Operations, wherein a Central Bank Purchases or Sells Bonds.*
- *Interest Received from Bonds.*
- *Returns from its Foreign Currency Assets.*
- *Lending to Banks for Very Short Tenures.*
- *30%: Recovery and Reconstruction Efforts.*
- *10%: Preparedness and Capacity-building Initiatives.*

Reasons for Increase in RBI's Surplus

- RBI had USD 646 billion in Foreign Exchange Reserves, with USD 409 billion parked in Top – rated Sovereign Securities.
  - In FY24, RBI's Foreign Exchange (Forex) Reserves surged by \$68 billion, which is Highest in 5 years.
- RBI's Gross Dollar Sales were Lower in FY24 (USD 153bn) compared to FY23 (USD 213 bn).

Related Facts

- *Govt has set Disinvestment Target of ₹50,000 Crore for FY25.*
- *It is about 67% Higher than Revised Target for FY24.*

Significance of Record RBI Surplus Transfer

- *Increased Capital Expenditure (CAPEX)*
- *Reduced Borrowing and Fiscal Consolidation*
- *Boost to Bond Markets*
- *Meeting Revenue Shortfall*
- *Covering Disinvestment Target*

Year	Event
1926	The 1926 Royal Commission on Indian Currency and Finance, also known as the Hilton Young Commission, recommended setting up a Central Bank for India.
1934	The Central Legislative Assembly accepted the recommendation and passed the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934, which provides the statutory basis for the functioning of the Bank.
1935	As per the provision of the RBI Act, the RBI was established in Calcutta and commenced its operations on 1st April, 1935.
1937	In 1937, the RBI was permanently moved from Calcutta to Mumbai, where its current Central Office is located.
1949	In 1949, the RBI, which was held by private stakeholders till now, was nationalized.

Key Facts about RBI

- The first Governor of the RBI was Sir Osborne Smith (1935-37).

- The first Indian Governor of the RBI was C.D. Deshmukh (1943-49)

- Manmohan Singh is the only Prime Minister of India who, till now, has also served as the Governor of the RBI.

- The emblem of the RBI is a Tiger and a Palm Tree.

- The Reserve Bank of India has 4 fully owned subsidiaries:

  a) Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC)

  b) Bharatiya Reserve Bank Note Mudran Private Limited (BRBNMPL)

  c) Reserve Bank Information Technology Private Limited (ReBIT)

  d) Indian Financial Technology and Allied Services (IFTAS)

Pepper it With

- Reasons of decrease and increase of forex Reserve , RBI Governor tenure.

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the answer key
of this month's
magazine.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What percentage higher is the current transfer compared to last year's Rs. 87,416 crore?
    (a) 120%   (b) 130%   (c) 140%   (d) 150%

2. What is the new Contingency Risk Buffer percentage for FY 2023-24?
    (a) 5.5%   (b) 6%   (c) 6.5%   (d) 7%

3. Which section of the RBI Act 1934 mandates profit transfer to the Centre?
    (a) Section 45   (b) Section 46   (c) Section 47   (d) Section 48

4. Who headed the committee to review the 2015-16 Economic Capital Framework?
    (a) Y H Malegam   (b) Bimal Jalan   (c) Urjit Patel   (d) Shaktikanta Das

5. What is the recommended range for the Contingency Risk Buffer according to the ECF?
    (a) 5% to 6%   (b) 5.5% to 6.5% (c) 6% to 7%   (d) 6.5% to 7.5%

6. Who led the RBI Board's Technical Committee in 2013?
    (a) Bimal Jalan   (b) Y H Malegam   (c) Urjit Patel   (d) Raghuram Rajan

7. What is the typical average of RBI's transfer to the government as a percentage of GDP?
    (a) 0.3%   (b) 0.4%   (c) 0.5%   (d) 0.6%

8. How much were RBI's foreign exchange reserves in USD?
    (a) $546 billion (b) $596 billion (c) $646 billion (d) $696 billion

9. How much of RBI's forex reserves were parked in top-rated sovereign securities?
    (a) $309 billion (b) $359 billion (c) $409 billion (d) $459 billion

10. By how much did RBI's forex reserves surge in FY24?
    (a) $48 billion   (b) $58 billion   (c) $68 billion   (d) $78 billion

11. What were RBI's gross dollar sales in FY24?
    (a) $123 billion (b) $133 billion (c) $143 billion (d) $153 billion

12. What were RBI's gross dollar sales in FY23?
    (a) $193 billion (b) $203 billion (c) $213 billion (d) $223 billion

13. The surge in forex reserves in FY24 was the highest in how many years?
    (a) 3 years   (b) 4 years   (c) 5 years   (d) 6 years

14. What does ECF stand for in the context of RBI?
    (a) Economic Capital Framework   (b) Excess Capital Framework
    (c) Exchange Control Framework   (d) External Capital Framework

15. What does CRB stand for in the context of RBI?
    (a) Capital Risk Buffer   (b) Contingency Reserve Buffer
    (c) Currency Risk Buffer   (d) Contingency Risk Buffer

16. Who was the first Governor of RBI?
    (a) Osborne smith   (b) CD Deshmukh   (c) Manmohan Singh   (d) C.V. Raman

17. Who is the only Prime Minister who has also served as Governor of RBI?
    (a) Indira Gandhi   (b) V.P.Singh   (c) Man Mohan singh   (d) Jawahar Lal Nehru

18. In which year was the Bimal Jalan committee constituted?
    (a) 2016   (b) 2017   (c) 2018   (d) 2019

19. The Emblem of RBI Includes which of the following tree?
    (a) Peeple Tree   (b) Neem Tree   (c) Coconut Tree   (d) Palm Tree

20. The increase in RBI's surplus is partly attributed to which of the following?
    (a) Increase in domestic borrowings   (b) Surge in foreign exchange reserves
    (c) Decrease in interest rates   (d) Increase in gold reserves

RBI's Gold Reserve

Why in News?

Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has transferred 100 metric tonnes of Gold from United Kingdom to Domestic Vaults in FY24.

Explained:

Gold reserves are basically a country's stash of gold bars and coins. Countries hold onto these reserves for a couple of reasons. First, gold is seen as a safe and stable investment, like a financial insurance policy. Second, having a lot of gold can boost a country's credibility and economic standing.

India recently brought a significant amount of its gold back from Britain. This move was likely made for a few reasons. First, storing gold abroad can be expensive. Bringing it home saves money on storage fees. Second, recent world events have made some countries wary of keeping too many assets in other countries. By bringing its gold home, India is taking more control of its own financial resources.

Way to marks:

Gold Reserve

- Gold held by a Country's Central Bank (RBI in case of India) Acting as a Backup for Financial Promises and a Store of Value.

- Purpose: To spread out Risk and facilitate International Trading.

- India's Total Gold Holding now stands at 822 metric tonnes in FY24.

- India's Gold Reserves are primarily stored in Bank of England.
  - o Portion of its Gold Reserves at Bank for International Settlements (BIS) in Basel (Switzerland) and Federal Reserve Bank of New York (United States).

    - ▪ This has marked the largest such repatriation since the early 1990s and signifies the RBI's evolving approach to managing its gold reserves.

    - ▪ During the 1990-91 foreign exchange crisis, India pledged part of its **gold reserves to the Bank of England to secure a USD 405 million loan.**

    - ▪ Although the loan was **repaid by November 1991, the RBI chose to keep the gold in the UK for**

Countries with Most Gold Reserves
United States of America (8,133.46 tonnes), Germany (3,352.65 tonnes), Italy (2,451.84 tonnes), France (2,436.88 tonnes), Russian Federation (2,332.74 tonnes), China (2,262.45 tonnes), Switzerland (1,040.00 tonnes), Japan (845.97 tonnes), India (822.09 tonnes), and Netherlands (612.45 tonnes) etc.

logistical reasons as the gold stored abroad can be easily used for trading, entering into swaps, and earning returns.

- The repatriation of gold reserves has **no financial implications** for India's GDP, tax collections, or the RBI's balance sheet, as it only involves a change in the storage location of the gold (the **total gold asset of the RBI will remain the same**).

- There are no customs or GST **implications** associated with this transfer, as the **gold being repatriated is already owned by India.**

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Historical Regime of Exchange Rate Management

</div>

- Gold Standard (1870 – 1914)

  o Currencies were directly tied to Value of Gold.

  o Each Country held Gold Reserves to back their Currency.

  o Stable Exchange Rates made International Trade Easier and Predictable.

- Bretton Woods System (1944 – 1971)

  o Aimed to create a More Stable and Predictable International Financial System.

  o Fixed Exchange Rates with US Dollar as Reserve Currency.

  o Other Currencies were pegged to Dollar at a Fixed Rate.

  o US Dollar was, in turn, convertible to Gold at a Fixed Price of USD 35 per ounce.

> *Special Drawing Rights*
>
> - *Created by IMF as a Supplement to Gold Reserves.*
>
> - *Basket of Major Currencies, Not Directly Convertible to Gold.*
>
> - *Price of Gold is determined by Supply and Demand in Free Market, Not by its connection to Currencies.*
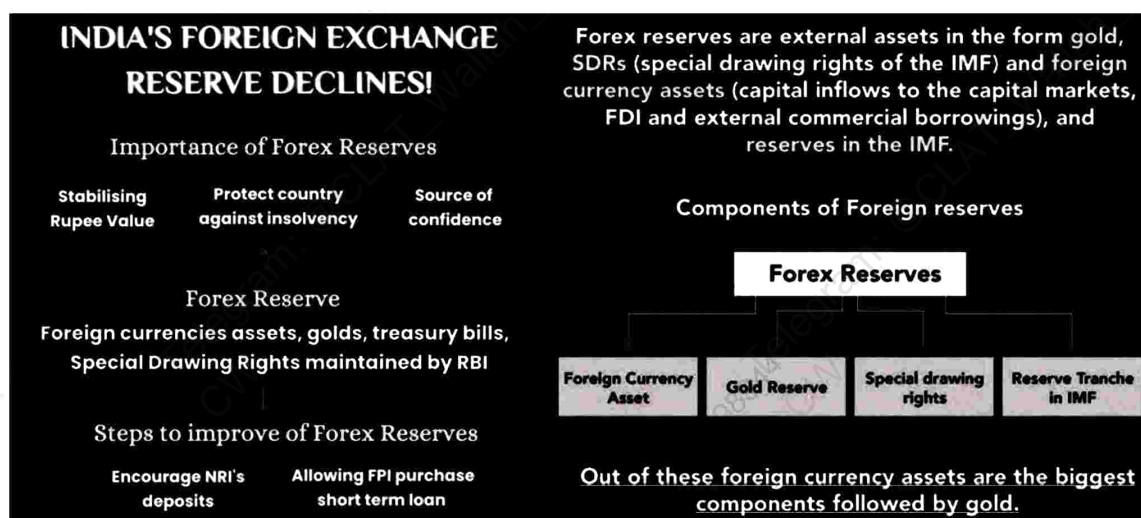
- ▪ **Objectives of Holding Forex Reserves:**
- o Supporting and maintaining confidence in the policies for monetary and exchange rate management.
- o Provides the capacity to intervene in support of the national or union currency.
- o Limits external vulnerability by maintaining foreign currency liquidity to absorb shocks during times of crisis or when access to borrowing is curtailed.
- ▪ **Significance of Rising Forex Reserves:**
- o **Comfortable Position for the Government:** The rising forex reserves give comfort to the government and the RBI in managing India's external and internal financial issues.
- o **Managing Crisis**: It serves as a cushion in the event of a **Balance of Payment (BoP)** crisis on the economic front.

- o **Rupee Appreciation:** The rising reserves have also helped the rupee to strengthen against the dollar.
- o **Confidence in Market:** Reserves will provide a level of confidence to markets and investors that a country can meet its external obligations.

Foreign Currency Assets

- FCAs are assets that are **valued based on a currency other than the country's own currency.**
- FCA is the **largest component** of the forex reserve. It is expressed in dollar terms.
- The FCAs include the **effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen** held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Forex Reserves Component	Billion $	%
1. Foreign Currency Assets	519.5	88.22%
2. Gold	45.7	7.76%
3. SDRs	18.5	3.14%
4. Reserve Position in IMF	5.2	0.88%
Total Forex Reserves	**588.9**	**100.00%**

Pepper it With

- Indian Sovereign gold bond , Inflating price of Gold in world.

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PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What is the primary purpose of gold reserves held by a country's central bank?
    (a) To increase GDP
    (b) To spread out risk and facilitate international trading
    (c) To boost domestic gold production
    (d) To control gold prices

2. As of FY24, how much gold does India hold in its total reserves?
    (a) 622 metric tonnes
    (b) 722 metric tonnes
    (c) 822 metric tonnes
    (d) 922 metric tonnes

3. Where is the majority of India's gold reserves primarily stored?
    (a) Reserve Bank of India
    (b) Bank of England
    (c) Federal Reserve Bank of New York
    (d) Bank for International Settlements

4. During which crisis did India pledge part of its gold reserves to the Bank of England?
    (a) 1980-81 foreign exchange crisis
    (b) 1990-91 foreign exchange crisis
    (c) 2008 global financial crisis
    (d) 2020 COVID-19 crisis

5. What was the amount of the loan secured by pledging gold reserves during the crisis?
    (a) USD 205 million
    (b) USD 305 million
    (c) USD 405 million
    (d) USD 505 million

6. What are the financial implications of repatriating gold reserves for India's GDP?
    (a) Significant increase
    (b) Slight decrease
    (c) No implications
    (d) Varies based on market conditions

7. Which of the following is NOT a component of India's Forex Reserves?
    (a) Foreign Currency Assets
    (b) Gold reserves
    (c) Special Drawing Rights
    (d) Treasury bonds

8. What is the primary currency in which most foreign exchange reserves are held?
    (a) Euro
    (b) Yen
    (c) US Dollar
    (d) Pound Sterling

9. Which of the following is an objective of holding Forex Reserves?
    (a) Increasing domestic gold production
    (b) Controlling inflation rates
    (c) Supporting monetary and exchange rate management policies
    (d) Boosting stock market performance

10. What does FCA stand for in the context of forex reserves?
    (a) Foreign Currency Assets
    (b) Fixed Currency Allocations
    (c) Foreign Credit Arrangements
    (d) Fiscal Currency Agreements

11. How does the rising forex reserves affect the Indian rupee?
    (a) Weakens it against the dollar
    (b) Strengthens it against the dollar
    (c) Has no effect on its value
    (d) Causes high volatility

12. What crisis can forex reserves help manage?
    (a) Political crisis
    (b) Environmental crisis
    (c) Balance of Payment (BoP) crisis
    (d) Technological crisis

13. Which of the following is NOT mentioned as a place where India stores a portion of its gold reserves?
    (a) Bank of England
    (b) Bank for International Settlements
    (c) Federal Reserve Bank of New York
    (d) European Central Bank

14. What is the largest component of forex reserves?
    (a) Gold reserves
    (b) Special Drawing Rights
    (c) Foreign Currency Assets
    (d) Reserve position with IMF

15. How are Foreign Currency Assets (FCAs) valued?
    (a) Always in the country's own currency
    (b) Based on a currency other than the country's own
    (c) Only in euros
    (d) Based on gold prices

16. What effect does the repatriation of gold reserves have on India's GST implications?
    (a) Increases GST collection
    (b) Decreases GST collection
    (c) No GST implications
    (d) Requires new GST regulations

17. Why did the RBI choose to keep gold in the UK after repaying the 1991 loan?
    (a) For security reasons
    (b) Due to international agreements
    (c) For logistical reasons
    (d) To avoid transportation costs

18. What does IMF stand for in the context of forex reserves?
    (a) International Monetary Fund
    (b) Indian Monetary Facility
    (c) International Market Forecast
    (d) Interbank Money Flow

19. How do forex reserves help during times of crisis?
    (a) By increasing gold production
    (b) By absorbing shocks and providing liquidity
    (c) By controlling domestic interest rates
    (d) By regulating international trade

20. What effect does the appreciation or depreciation of non-US currencies have on FCAs?
    (a) No effect
    (b) Only affects euro-denominated assets
    (c) Affects the value of FCAs expressed in dollars
    (d) Only affects yen-denominated assets

RBI's Repatriation of Gold from UK to India

Why in News?
- Reserve Bank of India has undertaken a significant strategic move by bringing back over 100 Tonnes of Gold from UK to its Domestic Vaults.

Background
- During 1990 – 91 Foreign Exchange Crisis, India pledged part of its Gold Reserves to Bank of England to secure a USD 405 million Loan.
- Although, Loan was Repaid by Nov 1991, RBI chose to keep Gold in UK for Logistical Reasons as Gold Stored Abroad can be easily used for Trading, entering into Swaps, and earning Returns.

The Reason
- Protection Against Inflation
- Hedge Against Geopolitical Uncertainty
- Diversification and Liquidity
- Strength and Confidence
- Storage Charges

Special Drawing Rights
- Created by IMF as a Supplement to Gold Reserves.
- Basket of Major Currencies, Not Directly Convertible to Gold.
- Price of Gold is determined by Supply and Demand in Free Market, Not by its connection to Currencies.

Gold Stock
- As of March 2024, RBI held 822.10 tonnes of Gold, with 408.31 Tonnes Stored Domestically
- Remaining 413.79 Tonnes are still held in Custody with Foreign Institutions like Bank of England and Bank for International Settlements.
- According to RBI as of April 2024, Share of Gold is USD 54.4 billion in Current Forex Reserve of India (USD 648.562 billion).

Gold Reserves in India
- Total Reserves of Gold Ore in India are estimated at 501.83 million Tonnes as of 2015.
- Largest Resources of Gold Ore: Bihar (44%) followed by Rajasthan (25%), Karnataka (21%), West Bengal (3%), Andhra Pradesh (3%), Jharkhand (2%)
- Kolar Gold Fields (KGF) in Kolar District is one of World's Oldest and Deepest Gold Mines.
- Karnataka commands around 80% of Nation's Total Gold Output.

WIPO Treaty Protecting Genetic Resources &Traditional Knowledge

Why in News?

WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources, and Associated Traditional Knowledge was adopted recently.

Explained:

The WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources, and Associated Traditional Knowledge aims to address the protection and fair use of genetic resources and traditional knowledge. Administered by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), this treaty seeks to balance the interests of indigenous communities, who have developed and maintained these resources, with those of researchers and commercial entities. It promotes equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources and ensures that traditional knowledge holders receive recognition and compensation.

The treaty's significance lies in its role in preventing biopiracy and ensuring that the utilization of genetic resources and traditional knowledge is conducted ethically and sustainably. By establishing clear guidelines and legal frameworks, the treaty fosters international cooperation and respect for indigenous rights. It also encourages innovation by facilitating access to genetic resources while safeguarding the cultural heritage and intellectual contributions of indigenous populations, promoting both biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development.

Way to marks:

About WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources, and Associated Traditional Knowledge.

- Held under the aegis of WIPO at its headquarters in Geneva.
- Conducted from May 13 to May 24, 2024.
- This is the **27th treaty adopted under the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO).**
- It is the first new treaty in a decade, highlighting its significance and the long gap since the last treaty.
- **The treaty's proposal was first introduced by Colombia in 1999.**
- **Negotiations officially began in 2021 and culminated in this diplomatic conference.**

Mandatory Disclosure:

- Patent applicants **must disclose the country of origin or the source of the genetic resources** when the claimed invention is based on these resources.
- **Applicants must also disclose the Indigenous Peoples or local community who provided the traditional knowledge if the patent is based on such knowledge.**

Entry into Force:

- The treaty will come into force once it is ratified by 15 parties.
- After adoption, the treaty was opened for signature.
- Signing the treaty indicates intent to comply with its provisions but does not legally bind a country to it.

Significance

- It is the **first treaty to specifically address genetic resources (GRs) and traditional knowledge (TK) held by Indigenous Peoples and local communities.**
- **The treaty aims to make the IP system more inclusive, catering to the needs of diverse countries and communities.**
- This is the first WIPO treaty to include provisions specifically for Indigenous Peoples and local communities.
- **India possesses 7-8% of the world's biodiversity.**
- **The country has a rich repository of knowledge based on these genetic resources.**
- The treaty is particularly significant for India due to its vast biodiversity and traditional.

Unaddressed Concerns:

- **Issues of Biopiracy-**
  - Despite the treaty's advancements, it does not fully resolve the issue of biopiracy—unauthorized use of genetic resources and traditional knowledge.
  - This remains a significant gap in the treaty.
- **Nagoya Protocol issues**
  - The Nagoya Protocol under the Convention on Biological Diversity ensures benefits from the use of traditional knowledge are shared with the communities that preserved it.
  - However, there are very few examples of effective benefit-sharing in practice.

WIPO
WORLD
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
ORGANIZATION

The Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilisation

- *Adoption:* Adopted on October 29, 2010, in Nagoya, Japan, under the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

- *Entry into Force:* Came into force on October 12, 2014.

- *Objectives:*

  (i) *Fair and Equitable Sharing:* Ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources, thereby contributing to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

  (ii) *Access to Genetic Resources:* Establish a transparent legal framework to facilitate access to genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge.

- *Provisions:*

  (i) *Prior Informed Consent (PIC):* Requires users to obtain prior informed consent from the provider country before accessing genetic resources.

  (ii) *Mutually Agreed Terms (MAT):* Stipulates that access to genetic resources should be based on mutually agreed terms between the provider and the user.

  (iii) *Benefit-Sharing:* Mandates the sharing of benefits (monetary or non-monetary) arising from the use of genetic resources with the provider country and indigenous communities.

World Intellectual Property Organisation

- It is the global forum for Intellectual Property (IP) services, policy, information and cooperation. It is a self-funding agency of the United Nations, with 193 member states including India.

- Its mission is to lead the development of a balanced and effective international IP system that enables innovation and creativity for the benefit of all.

- WIPO defines Traditional knowledge (TK) as knowledge, know-how, skills and practices that are developed, sustained and passed on from generation to generation within a community, often forming part of its cultural or spiritual identity.

What are the Past Cases Surrounding Traditional Knowledge and Genetic Resources in IPR?

Traditional Knowledge:

The Turmeric Case:.

In 1995, the US issued a patent for using turmeric powder for wound healing to the University of Mississippi Medical Center, but it was later revoked due to prior art evidence provided by the Indian Council for Science and Industrial Research (CSIR).

The Neem Case: It raised a controversy over a patent granted to a company W.R. Grace for a formulation using the active ingredient azadirachtin from the neem plant.

Genetic Resources:

- o **Wheat Varieties Case (2003):** The case involves biopiracy of Indian **wheat varieties known as Nap Hal and Nap Hal-49,** which were patented by a European company claiming to be the inventors.

- Indian authorities intervened and provided evidence that these wheat varieties originally belonged to India, were its natural resources and crop varieties, and were not novel inventions. As a result, the patents were revoked.

- o **Basmati Rice Case (2000):** It involved a US company being granted a patent for Basmati rice by the USPTO.

International initiatives for Access and Benefit-sharing of GR and TK

- Convention on Biological Diversity

- Nagoya Protocol

- TRIPS agreement

- International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

- Commission on Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture

- **UNESCO's Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS):** It is an interdisciplinary initiative that promotes indigenous and local knowledge and its meaningful inclusion in environmental policy and action.

Pepper it With

- Cartegana Protocol , TRIPS agreement

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PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. When was the WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources, and Associated Traditional Knowledge held?
   (a) May 13 to May 24, 2023
   (b) May 13 to May 24, 2024
   (c) June 13 to June 24, 2024
   (d) April 13 to April 24, 2024

2. Where was the diplomatic conference for this treaty held?
   (a) New York
   (b) Paris
   (c) Geneva
   (d) Vienna

3. Which country first introduced the proposal for this treaty?
   (a) India
   (b) USA
   (c) Colombia
   (d) Japan

4. In which year was the proposal for this treaty first introduced?
   (a) 1995
   (b) 1999
   (c) 2005
   (d) 2010

5. How many parties need to ratify the treaty for it to come into force?
   (a) 10
   (b) 15
   (c) 20
   (d) 25

6. What percentage of the world's biodiversity does India possess?
   (a) 5-6%
   (b) 7-8%
   (c) 9-10%
   (d) 11-12%

7. Which of the following is NOT addressed by the treaty?
   (a) Genetic resources
   (b) Traditional knowledge
   (c) Intellectual property
   (d) Climate change

8. What does signing the treaty indicate?
   (a) Legal binding to comply with its provisions
   (b) Intent to comply with its provisions
   (c) Immediate ratification
   (d) Rejection of the treaty

9. When was the Nagoya Protocol adopted?
   (a) October 29, 2010
   (b) October 12, 2014
   (c) October 29, 2014
   (d) October 12, 2010

10. When did the Nagoya Protocol come into force?
    (a) October 29, 2010
    (b) October 12, 2014
    (c) October 29, 2014
    (d) October 12, 2010

11. What does PIC stand for in the context of the Nagoya Protocol?
    (a) Prior Informed Consent
    (b) Potential Intellectual Capacity
    (c) Protocol for Indigenous Communities
    (d) Principle of International Cooperation

12. How many member states does WIPO have?
    (a) 150   (b) 175   (c) 193   (d) 200

13. Which of the following is NOT a past case surrounding Traditional Knowledge and Genetic Resources in IPR?
    (a) The Turmeric Case   (b) The Neem Case
    (c) Wheat Varieties Case   (d) The Coffee Case

14. In which year did the Basmati Rice Case occur?
    (a) 1995   (b) 2000   (c) 2003   (d) 2010

15. Which organization is responsible for the Local and Indigenous Knowledge Systems (LINKS) initiative?
    (a) WHO   (b) WIPO   (c) UNESCO   (d) UNEP

16. What is the primary objective of the Nagoya Protocol?
    (a) To protect intellectual property rights
    (b) To ensure fair and equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources
    (c) To promote international trade
    (d) To regulate biotechnology

17. Which of the following is NOT an international initiative for Access and Benefit-sharing of GR and TK?
    (a) Convention on Biological Diversity   (b) TRIPS agreement
    (c) Kyoto Protocol   (d) Nagoya Protocol

18. What does TK stand for in the context of the WIPO treaty?
    (a) Technical Knowledge   (b) Technological Know-how
    (c) Traditional Knowledge   (d) Transferable Knowledge

19. Which US institution was initially granted a patent for using turmeric powder for wound healing?
    (a) Harvard University   (b) University of Mississippi Medical Center
    (c) Stanford University   (d) MIT

20. What is the main unaddressed concern in the WIPO treaty?
    (a) Climate change   (b) Biopiracy   (c) International trade   (d) Intellectual property rights
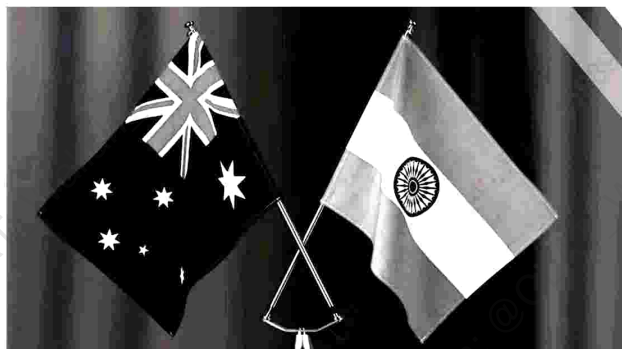
India to take Australia to WTO Arbitration

Why in News?

India has sought arbitration proceedings under World Trade Organization (WTO) rules against Australia to resolve an issue concerning Services Sector, as it could impact India's Trade in Services.

Explained:

Arbitration in the World Trade Organization (WTO) is a method used to resolve trade disputes between member countries. It involves an impartial arbitrator or panel making a binding decision based on evidence and WTO agreements. This process is part of the broader WTO Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) framework, which ensures that trade disputes are handled fairly, transparently, and efficiently.

The Dispute Settlement Body is integral to maintaining the rules-based international trading system. It oversees the entire dispute resolution process, from consultation to arbitration and implementation of rulings. By providing a structured mechanism for addressing trade conflicts, the DSB helps prevent unilateral actions and trade wars, promoting stability and predictability in global commerce. The effectiveness of the DSB in enforcing compliance with trade agreements underscores its critical role in the functioning of the WTO.

Way to marks:

The Issue

- In Feb 2024 in Abu Dhabi, over 70 WTO Nations agreed to Joint Statement Initiatives (JSIs) to take Additional Obligations under General Agreement on Goods in Services (GATS) to ease Non – Good Trade among Themselves and extend Similar Concessions to All Other Members of WTO.

- These obligations seek to mitigate Unintended Trade Restrictive Measures relating to Licensing Requirements and Procedures, Qualification Requirements and Procedures and Technical Standards among themselves.

- It will also benefit Indian Professional Companies which will now have Equal Opportunity to Access Markets in these 70 Countries if they meet the Standards.

- As per estimates, JSI will help Reduce Services Trade Costs by 10% for Lower – Middle – Income Economies and 14% for Upper – Middle – Income Economies, with Overall Savings of USD 127 billion.

Opposition to Joint Statement Initiatives

- New Agreement in Abu Dhabi is a Plurilateral Agreement where just 72 out of 164 WTO Members are a Party.

- India, South Africa and Many WTO Members haven't agreed to this deal.

- o India, like other Developing Nations, opposed various Joint Statement Initiatives (JSIs) because they're Not negotiated by All Members.
- Australia's adherence to its Commitments under a JSI is a Point of Contention in the Dispute.

Australia Case

- In 2023, Australia notified WTO about intention to Modify its Schedule of Specific Commitments under GATS to incorporate Additional Commitments relating to Services Domestic Regulation.
- As an "Affected Member", India has stated that Australia's Intended Modification of its Specific Commitments does Not Satisfy Certain Conditions.
- Despite negotiations between India and Australia, No Agreement was reached.

WTO's Dispute Settlement Mechanism

- Consultations: Before initiating a Formal Dispute, Complaining Party must Request Consultations with Defending Party.

- Panel Establishment: If Consultations fail to resolve the Dispute, Complaining Party can request Establishment of Dispute Settlement Panel.
    - o General Council convenes as DSB to deal with disputes between WTO Members.
    - o Panel's Report includes Findings of Fact, Legal Interpretations and Recommendations for a Resolution.
        - It is circulated to All WTO Members, allowing them to Review and provide Comments.
    - o Report becomes Dispute Settlement Body's Ruling or Recommendation within 60 days unless a consensus rejects it.

WTO's Appellate Body
- *Established in 1995*
- *Members: 7 Persons*
- *Tenure: 4 years*
- *Seat: Geneva (Switzerland)*

- WTO's Appellate Body: Can Uphold, Modify or Reverse Legal Findings and Conclusions of a Panel.
    - o Appellate Body Reports, once adopted by DSB, must be accepted by Parties to the Dispute.

- Implementation of Recommendations: If a WTO Member is found to violate its obligations, it is expected to bring its measures into compliance with WTO Agreements.
    - o If Member fails to do so, Complainant may seek Authorisation to retaliate through Suspension of Concessions or Other Measures.

Related Facts
- *In Abu Dhabi, Feb 2024, 13th Ministerial Conference (MC13) of WTO was held up.*
- o *Chaired By: Dr Thani bin Ahmed Al Zeyoudi (Minister of State for Foreign Trade).*
- *Before this, in 2022 in Geneva at WTO Headquarters was 12th Ministerial Conference (MC12) where Timur Suleimenov, Deputy Chief of Staff to Kazakh President, officiated.*
- *1st Ministerial Conference (MC1) was in Singapore at 1996.*
- *WTO appreciates the joining of Comoros (165th) as well as Timor Leste (166th) to be one of its Member States.*

〰 WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

- WTO is the only global international organization dealing with the rules of trade between nations.
- At its heart are the WTO agreements, negotiated and signed by the bulk of the world's trading nations and ratified in their parliaments.

Members
- 164 members (including the European Union) and 23 observer governments.

History

- The General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) traces its origins to the 1944 Bretton Woods Conference, which laid the foundations for the post-World War II financial system and established two key institutions, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank.
- An agreement signed by 23 countries in Geneva in 1947 came into force on Jan 1, 1948, with the following purposes-
  ➤ to phase out the use of import quotas
  ➤ and to reduce tariffs on merchandise trade,
- The GATT became the only multilateral instrument governing international trade from 1948 until the WTO was established in 1995.
- The Uruguay Round, conducted from 1987 to 1994, culminated in the Marrakesh Agreement, established WTO.

Functions of WTO

- The WTO's overriding objective is to help trade flow smoothly, freely, fairly and predictably. It does this by:
  ➤ Administering WTO trade agreements
  ➤ Conducting forum for trade negotiations

Governance

- Ministerial Conference
  ➤ It is the Topmost decision-making body of WTO, which usually meets every two years.
  ➤ It takes decisions on all matters under any of the

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE WTO

Ministerial Conference
- Highest decision-making body.
- Meets biennially

General Council
- Oversees day-to-day operations.
- Acts as Trade Negotiations, Dispute Settlement, and Trade Policy Review bodies.
- Regular meetings at Geneva Headquarters.

Dispute Settlement Panels
- Examines trade disputes between WTO members.
- Issues reports with findings and recommendations.

Appellate Body
- Reviews appeals from dispute settlement panels.
- Plays a crucial role in interpreting and upholding WTO rules

Pepper it With

- India's export and imports , Appellate dispute settlement body jammed by US.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. How many members does the World Trade Organization (WTO) have?
   (a) 154   (b) 164   (c) 174   (d) 184

2. When was the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) established?
   (a) 1944   (b) 1947   (c) 1948   (d) 1995

3. Which round of negotiations led to the establishment of the WTO?
   (a) Tokyo Round   (b) Kennedy Round   (c) Uruguay Round   (d) Doha Round

4. How many countries initially signed the GATT agreement in Geneva?
   (a) 13   (b) 23   (c) 33   (d) 43

5. In which year was the WTO established?
   (a) 1985   (b) 1990   (c) 1995   (d) 2000

6. Where were the recent Joint Statement Initiatives (JSIs) agreed upon in 2024?
   (a) Geneva   (b) Abu Dhabi   (c) Marrakesh   (d) Doha

7. How many WTO nations agreed to the JSIs in 2024?
   (a) Over 50   (b) Over 60   (c) Over 70   (d) Over 80

8. What is the estimated overall savings from the JSIs?
   (a) USD 97 billion   (b) USD 107 billion   (c) USD 117 billion   (d) USD 127 billion

9. Which country's adherence to JSI commitments is a point of contention in a recent dispute?
   (a) United States   (b) China   (c) Australia   (d) Japan

10. What does GATS stand for?
    (a) General Agreement on Trade and Services   (b) Global Agreement on Tariffs and Services
    (c) General Agreement on Trade in Services   (d) Global Agreement on Trade and Subsidies

11. Which of these countries has NOT opposed the recent JSIs?
    (a) India   (b) South Africa   (c) Australia   (d) Brazil

12. What is the first step in the WTO dispute settlement process?
    (a) Panel establishment   (b) Consultations
    (c) Appellate review   (d) Implementation of recommendations

13. Who convenes as the Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) in WTO disputes?
    (a) General Council   (b) Appellate Body   (c) Panel of experts   (d) Secretary-General

14. How long does it typically take for a panel report to become a DSB ruling?
    (a) 30 days   (b) 45 days   (c) 60 days   (d) 90 days

15. What can the Appellate Body do with a panel's legal findings?
    (a) Only uphold them   (b) Only reverse them
    (c) Uphold, modify, or reverse them   (d) Only comment on them

16. What happens if a WTO member fails to comply with DSB recommendations?
    (a) Automatic expulsion from WTO
    (b) Monetary fine
    (c) Complainant may seek authorization to retaliate
    (d) Nothing

17. Which conference laid the foundations for the post-World War II financial system?
    (a) Geneva Conference   (b) Bretton Woods Conference
    (c) Havana Conference   (d) San Francisco Conference

18. How many observer governments does the WTO have?
    (a) 13   (b) 18   (c) 23   (d) 28

19. What was one of the purposes of the 1947 GATT agreement?
    (a) To increase import quotas   (b) To phase out the use of import quotas
    (c) To increase tariffs on merchandise trade   (d) To establish the World Bank

20. According to estimates, by what percentage will the JSI help reduce services trade costs for upper-middle-income economies?
    (a) 8%   (b) 10%   (c) 12%   (d) 14%

World's 1st Rocket with fully 3D-Printed Engine

Why in News?

IIT Madras' Startup, Agnikul Cosmos, has launched Agnibaan SubOrbital Technology Demonstrator (SOrTeD), with a 3 – D Printed Engine.

Explained:

3D printing, or additive manufacturing, is a technology that creates three-dimensional objects by layering materials based on digital models. This process involves adding material layer by layer, typically using plastics, resins, or metals, to build an object from the ground up. The design is created in a digital file, often using CAD (Computer-Aided Design) software, which is then interpreted by the 3D printer to fabricate the physical object.

This technology has revolutionized manufacturing, allowing for rapid prototyping, customization, and the production of complex geometries that would be difficult or impossible with traditional manufacturing methods. Applications span various industries, including healthcare for prosthetics and implants, aerospace for lightweight parts, and consumer goods for bespoke products. The ability to produce items on-demand reduces waste and lowers production costs, marking a significant advancement in modern manufacturing techniques.

Way to marks:

SOrTeD

- SOrTeD stands for Agnibaan SubOrbital Technology Demonstrator
- Developed By: Agnikul Cosmos
- World's 1st Rocket with fully 3D – Printed Engine
- India's 1st Semi – Cryogenic Engine – powered Rocket Launch
- Launch Pad: Dhanush (India's 1st Privately Developed Launchpad)
- 2 – Stage Rocket with a capacity to carry up to 300 kg to a height of 700 km.
- Powered By: Liquid Oxygen or Kerosene.

3D Printing
- *Additive Process that uses Computer – created design to make 3 – Dimensional Objects Layer by Layer.*
- *Layers of Material: Plastic, Composites or Bio – Materials*
- *Invented By: Charles W Hull*

Other Initiatives Taken for Privatising Space Sector

- 100% FDI in Space Sector is allowed in Components and Systems/ Sub-Systems for Satellites, Ground Segment and User Segment.
- India Space Policy 2023 suggests that Private Sector is a Critical Stakeholder in Entire Value Chain of Space Economy.

- Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN – SPACe) facilitate Private Sector engagement in Space Activities.

IN – SPACe

- IN – SPACe stands for Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center.

- Established in 2020.

- Single-Window, Independent, Nodal Agency

- Functions as Autonomous Agency in Department of Space.

- Objective: To enable and facilitate Participation of Private Players.

- Acts as an interface between ISRO and Non-Governmental Entities.

CAN USE SPACEPORTS, SET UP GROUND STNS

➤ Dept of space (DoS) keen to allow foreign firms to set up facilities in India to make satellites and launch vehicles

➤ Foreign cos likely to be permitted if they bring in investments or through JVs with Indian firms. Policy details being worked out

➤ India's spaceports could be opened for use by international firms

➤ Policy likely to allow foreign companies to also set up ground stations in India for telemetry tracking

➤ Approvals to be granted on case-by-case basis, given the sensitive nature of the sector. National interest and security will remain priority, DoS secy says

3D Printing Technology usage

3D printing technology is driving transformation across major industries in India due to its ability to enable faster design iterations, simplified production workflows and greater customization. Key sectors adopting 3D printing across various applications are:

- **Aerospace:** Lightweight printed aircraft and spacecraft parts can replace traditionally manufactured parts to reduce weight and material needs.
  - HAL and **Wipro 3D** printed an air blower component for the **TEJAS aircraft** using **direct metal laser sintering (DMLS).** It achieved a 50% weight reduction compared to conventional manufacturing.
  - **GE's first 3D-printed jet engine fuel nozzle** component manufactured in India improved durability and thermal efficiency.

- **Automotive:** The automotive industry uses 3D printing for rapid prototyping and to produce specialised parts and tools. Printed parts help improve design and can reduce weight.
  - Mahindra produces around **200 3D-printed polymer parts** annually for vehicle prototypes. This has accelerated design verification and development.
  - Tata Motors uses **selective laser sintering** to batch-produce plastic and rubber spare parts. It has reduced costs by 80-90% compared to conventional techniques.

- **Construction:** 3D printing technology is being used to construct scale models of buildings, bridges, and even full-scale houses and other structures using concrete and other materials.
  - India's first **3D-printed house** was built in just 2 weeks by **Tvasta** using the concrete extrusion technique. It enables faster, sustainable construction.
  - **'Amaze 28',** Kerala's first 3D printed building, was constructed in just 28 days at 75% reduced labour cost.

- **Healthcare:** 3D printing is revolutionising healthcare with customised prosthetics, implants, anatomical models for surgery practice, and pharmaceuticals.

- o **3D printed skull implant** by medtech startup **Yaantra** enabled surgeons to accurately visualise tumour shape and remove guesswork during surgery.
- o **Ossio's 3D-printed orthopaedic implants** made from proprietary Ossioglass match natural bone strength and hardness.

Key Initiatives in India for 3D Printing

Recognizing 3D printing's immense potential for economic growth and self-reliance, the Government of India has devised targeted policies and initiatives:

- **National Strategy for Additive Manufacturing**: Formulated by the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology** in 2021, lays down a strategic roadmap to foster 3D printing research, skill development, manufacturing and global partnerships.
- **Key goals:**
  - o Enable 100 innovative 3D printing startups.
  - o Develop 50 India-centric technologies by 2025
  - o Train 5,000 skilled workers by 2024
- **Samarth Udyog:** This **Industry 4.0** initiative by the **Ministry of Heavy Industries** aims to enhance manufacturing competitiveness, including the adoption of 3D printing.
- **Make in India 2.0:** As part of its **Atmanirbhar Bharat vision**, the government plans to position India as a global 3D printing hub.
- **Partnerships with Global Institutes**: The government has collaborated with organizations like **Applied Materials** to establish cutting-edge 3D printing research centres.
- **Defence Initiatives:** The defence sector has recognized 3D printing's benefits for component production. **DRDO** and **BEL** are actively using the technology.
- **Healthcare advances:** The **Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC)** initiated a 3D printing grand challenge to develop **localised healthcare solutions.**
- **Skilling Programs: The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)** and central and state governments have launched programs to train youth in 3D printing. **PM Kaushal Kendras** offer training.

Pepper it With

- India's growth in other new technology like internet of things, Machine learning., 3D modelled post office in India.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What does SOrTeD stand for?
    (a) Space Orbital Technology Demonstrator
    (b) Suborbital Orbital Test Device
    (c) Agnibaan SubOrbital Technology Demonstrator
    (d) Advanced Orbital Technology Demonstrator

2. Which company developed SOrTeD?
    (a) ISRO
    (b) Agnikul Cosmos
    (c) Skyroot Aerospace
    (d) Bellatrix Aerospace

3. What is unique about SOrTeD's engine?
    (a) It's the world's first fully 3D-printed engine
    (b) It uses solid fuel
    (c) It's reusable
    (d) It's powered by solar energy

4. What type of engine does SOrTeD use?
    (a) Cryogenic
    (b) Semi-cryogenic
    (c) Solid fuel
    (d) Electric

5. What is the name of India's first privately developed launchpad?
    (a) Sriharikota
    (b) Thumba
    (c) Dhanush
    (d) Vikram

6. What is the payload capacity of SOrTeD?
    (a) Up to 100 kg
    (b) Up to 200 kg
    (c) Up to 300 kg
    (d) Up to 500 kg

7. What fuel does SOrTeD use?
    (a) Solid fuel
    (b) Liquid oxygen and kerosene
    (c) Liquid hydrogen and liquid oxygen
    (d) Methane and liquid oxygen

8. What is the maximum altitude SOrTeD can reach?
    (a) 500 km
    (b) 600 km
    (c) 700 km
    (d) 800 km

9. What percentage of FDI is allowed in the space sector for components and systems?
    (a) 49%
    (b) 74%
    (c) 90%
    (d) 100%

10. What is IN-SPACe?
    (a) Indian Space Research Organization
    (b) Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Center
    (c) International Space Partnership and Collaboration Entity
    (d) Indian Network for Space and Planetary Exploration

11. In which year was IN-SPACe established?
    (a) 2018 (b) 2019 (c) 2020 (d) 2021

12. Which company produced India's first 3D-printed jet engine fuel nozzle component?
    (a) HAL (b) Wipro 3D (c) GE (d) Tata Motors

13. How much weight reduction was achieved in the 3D-printed air blower component for the TEJAS aircraft?
    (a) 25% (b) 40% (c) 50% (d) 75%

14. Which company uses selective laser sintering to produce plastic and rubber spare parts?
    (a) Mahindra (b) Tata Motors (c) Maruti Suzuki (d) Hyundai

15. How long did it take to build India's first 3D-printed house?
    (a) 1 week (b) 2 weeks (c) 3 weeks (d) 4 weeks

16. What is the name of Kerala's first 3D-printed building?
    (a) Amaze 24 (b) Amaze 26 (c) Amaze 28 (d) Amaze 30

17. Which ministry formulated the National Strategy for Additive Manufacturing?
    (a) Ministry of Science and Technology
    (b) Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology
    (c) Ministry of Heavy Industries
    (d) Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

18. How many innovative 3D printing startups does the National Strategy for Additive Manufacturing aim to enable?
    (a) 50 (b) 75 (c) 100 (d) 150

19. Which initiative aims to enhance manufacturing competitiveness, including the adoption of 3D printing?
    (a) Make in India 2.0 (b) Samarth Udyog (c) Digital India (d) Skill India

20. Which organization initiated a 3D printing grand challenge to develop localized healthcare solutions?
    (a) DRDO (b) ISRO (c) BIRAC (d) NSDC

Why in News?

IIT Madras' Startup, Agnikul Cosmos, has launched Agnibaan SubOrbital Technology Demonstrator (SOrTeD), with a 3 – D Printed Engine.

SOrTeD

SOrTeD stands for Agnibaan SubOrbital Technology Demonstrator

Developed By: Agnikul Cosmos

World's 1st Rocket with fully 3D – Printed Engine

India's 1st Semi – Cryogenic Engine – powered Rocket Launch

Launch Pad: Dhanush (India's 1st Privately Developed Launchpad)

World's 1st Rocket with fully 3D – Printed Engine

Other Initiatives Taken for Privatising Space Sector

100% FDI in Space Sector is allowed in Components and Systems/Sub-Systems for Satellites, Ground Segment and User Segment.

India Space Policy 2023 suggests that Private Sector is a Critical Stakeholder in Entire Value Chain of Space Economy.

Indian National Space Promotion and Authorization Centre (IN – SPACe) facilitate Private Sector engagement in Space Activities.

Gender Gap Report 2024

Why in News?

World Economic Forum (WEF) published the 18th Edition of Global Gender Gap Report (2024).

Explained:

The Global Gender Gap Report, published annually by the World Economic Forum, measures gender equality across countries based on economic participation, education, health, and political empowerment. It provides a comprehensive overview of the progress and challenges in achieving gender parity worldwide. The report ranks countries, highlighting both successes and areas needing improvement.

The relevance of the Global Gender Gap Report lies in its ability to inform policymakers, businesses, and civil society about the state of gender equality. By identifying gaps and best practices, the report encourages targeted actions to close these disparities. It also fosters accountability and awareness, driving global efforts towards a more inclusive and equitable society.

Way to marks:

Global Gender Gap Report

- Inception in 2006.
- Released By: World Economic Forum (WEF)
- Highlights Persistent Gender Inequality a cross various sector globally.
- Provides Scores between 0 and 1, where 1 shows Full Gender Parity and 0 is Complete Imparity
- Benchmarks Current State and Evolution of Gender Parity based on 14 Indicators across 4 Key Dimensions: Economic Participation and Opportunity; Educational Attainment; Health and Survival, Political Empowerment.

Gender Inequality Index

- *Released by UNDP*
- *Also a Composite Metric of Gender Inequality based on 3 dimensions: Reproductive Health, Empowerment and Labour Market.*

Key Findings

- Global Gender Gap Score in 2024 for All 146 Countries included in this edition stands at 68.5%.
- No Country has achieved Full Gender Parity.
- Among 146 Countries; Iceland, Finland, Norway, New Zealand and Sweden are Top Five Countries.
- Iceland has maintained its position as Most Gender – Equal Country for 15th Consecutive Year, with a Gender Gap Score of 93.5%.

- o Finland continues to be Only Economy to have closed over 90% of its Gender Gap.

- Spain and Ireland made notable jumps into Top 10 in 2024, climbing 8 and 2 ranks respectively compared to 2023.

- 7 out of Top 10 Countries are from Europe (Iceland, Finland, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Ireland, Spain).

- Other Regions represented are Eastern Asia and Pacific (New Zealand at 4), Latin America and Caribbean (Nicaragua at 6), Sub – Saharan Africa (Namibia at 8).

- Sudan was ranked Last on Index of 146 Countries, while Pakistan slipped 2 places to 145th.

- Share of Women in Parliamentary Positions has shown an Almost Uninterrupted Positive Trajectory since 2006.

- Women constitute 28.2% of STEM Workforce and 47.3% of Non – STEM Workforce.

- At Current Rate of Progress, it will take 134 years to reach Full Parity.

Regional Performance

- Europe leads with 75% of its Gender Gap Closed, followed by Northern America (74.8%) and Latin America & Caribbean (74.2%).

- Middle East and North Africa Region ranks last at 61.7% of its Gender Gap Closed.

- Southern Asia Region ranks 7th out of 8 Regions with a Gender Parity Score of Only 63.7%.

India's Performance

- India ranked 129 (64.1%) in 2024's Index, scoring marginally Lower than Previous Edition (127th).
  - o Mainly Result of Small Declines in "Educational Attainment" and "Political Empowerment", while "Economic Participation and Opportunity" slightly improved.

- India showed Best Gender Parity in terms of Enrolment in Secondary Education.

- In Political Empowerment, India scored within Top 10 on Head – of – State Indicator and ranked 65th with globally in Political Empowerment of Women.
  - o But its scores for Women's Representation at Federal Level, in Ministerial Positions (6.9%) and in Parliament (17.2%), remain Relatively Low.

- 5th in South Asia after Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bhutan.

Gender Inequality in India (NFHS – 5)

- **Sex Ratio:** Overall Sex Ratio in India is 1020 Females per 1000 Males.
  - o However, Sex Ratio at Birth remains Low at 929

- **Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR):** As per Special Bulletin on MMR released by Registrar General of India, MMR of India stands at 97 per lakh Live Births for 2018 – 20.

- **Malnutrition:** 18.7% of Women aged 15-49 years are Underweight, 21.2% of Women aged 15-49 years are Stunted and nearly 53% of Women aged 15-49 years are Anaemic.

- **Education:** Literacy Rate in Females is 70.3% compared to about 84.7% for Men.

- **Child Marriage:** 23.3% of women aged 20-24 years were Married or in a Union before age 18.

- **Employment:** As per PLFS, Only around 32.8% of Females of Working Age (15 years and above) were in Labour Force in 2021-22.

- **Informalisation:** According to ILO, 81.8% of Women's Employment in India is concentrated in Informal Economy.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. When was the Global Gender Gap Report first released?
   (a) 2000   (b) 2006   (c) 2010   (d) 2015

2. Which organization releases the Global Gender Gap Report?
   (a) United Nations
   (b) World Bank
   (c) World Economic Forum
   (d) International Monetary Fund

3. What is the global gender gap score for 2024?
   (a) 58.5%   (b) 68.5%   (c) 78.5%   (d) 88.5%

4. Which country has maintained its position as the most gender-equal country for 15 consecutive years?
   (a) Finland   (b) Norway   (c) Sweden   (d) Iceland

5. How many years will it take to reach full gender parity at the current rate of progress?
   (a) 74 years   (b) 94 years   (c) 114 years   (d) 134 years

6. What percentage of the STEM workforce is constituted by women?
   (a) 18.2%   (b) 28.2%   (c) 38.2%   (d) 48.2%

7. Which region ranks last in closing its gender gap?
   (a) Southern Asia
   (b) Sub-Saharan Africa
   (c) Middle East and North Africa
   (d) Latin America and Caribbean

8. What is India's rank in the 2024 Global Gender Gap Index?
   (a) 119   (b) 129   (c) 139   (d) 149

9. In which area did India show the best gender parity?
   (a) Political Empowerment
   (b) Economic Participation
   (c) Health and Survival
   (d) Enrolment in Secondary Education

10. What is the overall sex ratio in India according to NFHS-5?
    (a) 920 females per 1000 males
    (b) 970 females per 1000 males
    (c) 1020 females per 1000 males
    (d) 1070 females per 1000 males

11. What is India's Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) for 2018-20?
    (a) 77 per lakh live births
    (b) 87 per lakh live births
    (c) 97 per lakh live births
    (d) 107 per lakh live births

12. What percentage of women aged 15-49 years are anaemic in India?
    (a) 33%   (b) 43%   (c) 53%   (d) 63%

13. What is the literacy rate for females in India?
    (a) 60.3%   (b) 70.3%   (c) 80.3%   (d) 90.3%

14. What percentage of women aged 20-24 years were married before age 18 in India?
    (a) 13.3%   (b) 23.3%   (c) 33.3%   (d) 43.3%

15. According to PLFS, what percentage of females of working age were in the labor force in 2021-22?
    (a) 22.8%   (b) 32.8%   (c) 42.8%   (d) 52.8%

16. What percentage of women's employment in India is concentrated in the informal economy?
    (a) 61.8%   (b) 71.8%   (c) 81.8%   (d) 91.8%

17. How many indicators are used to benchmark gender parity in the Global Gender Gap Report?
    (a) 10   (b) 12   (c) 14   (d) 16

18. Which country ranks last in the 2024 Global Gender Gap Index?
    (a) Afghanistan (b) Yemen   (c) Pakistan   (d) Sudan

19. What is the sex ratio at birth in India according to the information provided?
    (a) 909   (b) 919   (c) 929   (d) 939

20. How many countries out of the top 10 in the Global Gender Gap Index are from Europe?
    (a) 5   (b) 6   (c) 7   (d) 8

For more exam related material, scan the code to join our Telegram Channel

1ˢᵗ Global Mangrove Assessment for IUCN Red List of Ecosystems

Why in News?

For 1st time, Ecosystem Group has been assessed entirely using IUCN Red List of Ecosystems (RLE).

Explained:

Mangroves are coastal forests that thrive in salty and brackish waters, characterized by dense networks of roots that protrude above the water. These unique ecosystems are found in tropical and subtropical regions and serve as vital habitats for a wide variety of marine life. Mangroves provide numerous benefits, including coastal protection from erosion and storm surges, carbon sequestration, and support for fisheries by serving as nurseries for fish and other aquatic species. Their dense root systems also help trap sediments and filter pollutants, improving water quality.

Despite their importance, mangroves face significant threats. Deforestation for agriculture, aquaculture, and urban development has led to extensive habitat loss. Climate change poses additional risks, with rising sea levels and increased frequency of extreme weather events threatening their survival. Pollution from industrial and agricultural runoff further degrades these ecosystems, reducing their ability to provide critical services and support biodiversity. Protecting and restoring mangroves is essential to preserving their ecological and economic benefits.

Way to marks:

Key Findings of Assessment

- 50% of Mangrove Ecosystems Assessed are at Risk of Collapse with nearly 20% at High Risk (Either Endangered or Critically Endangered).

- Climate Change threatens 1/3rd (33%) of Assessed Mangrove Ecosystems.

- Due to Sea – level Rise, 25% of Global Mangrove Area is predicted to be submerged in Next 50 Years.

> **IUCN's RLE**
> *Global Standard for measuring Health of Ecosystems, Assess Threat Levels and Identifying Most Effective Management Pathways.*

- Without significant changes by 2050, Climate Change and Sea Level Rise will result in Loss of around 1.8 billion tonnes of Carbon Stored and Exposure of 2.1 million lives to Coastal Flooding.

- Status of Indian Mangroves: Andaman and Bay of Bengal (Least Concern), South India (Critically Endangered), West India (Vulnerable).

- Threats to Mangroves: Climate Change, Deforestation, Development, Pollution, Dam Construction.

Mangroves

- Type of Coastal Ecosystem

Found in Tropical and Subtropical Regions.

- Dense Forests of Salt-Tolerant Trees and Shrubs that thrive in Intertidal Zones (where Land meets the Sea).

- Characterized by their Ability to Withstand Harsh Conditions, such as Saline Water, Tidal Fluctuations and Muddy, Oxygen – Poor Soils.

Importance of Mangroves

- Provide Essential Ecosystem Services and Ecological Support for Fisheries and Biodiversity.

- Acts as Carbon Sinks storing around 11 billion tons of Carbon.

  o Mangroves cover Only about 0.1% of Planet's Surface, they can potentially store up to 10x More Carbon per Hectare (ha) than Terrestrial Forests.

- Improves Water Quality through Filtering Pollutants and Trapping Sediments.

- Protect Coastal Communities by acting as a Natural Barrier against Storm Surges.

Mangrove Cover in India

- India is home to about 3% of Total Mangrove Cover in South Asia.

  o South Asia and South – East Asia 's contribution is 45.8% of World's Total Mangrove Cover.

- According to Indian State Forest Report 2021, Mangrove cover in India is 4992 sq km which is 0.15% of India's Total Geographical Area.

  o India lost 40% of its Mangrove Cover during Last Century with Kerala losing 95% of its Mangroves in last 3 decades.

  o Shrimp Farming is responsible for around 35% of Overall Loss of Mangrove Forests.

- Sundarbans in West Bengal are Largest Mangrove Forest Regions in the world.

  o 40% of Sundarbans lies in India and Rest in Bangladesh.

  o Sundarbans was designated a UNESCO World Heritage site in 1987 (India) & 1997 (Bangladesh)

  o Sundarbans Wetland, India was recognised as "Wetland of International Importance" under Ramsar Convention in Jan 2019.

  o World's 1st Mangrove Forest, which was brought under Scientific Management, since 1892.

- Largest Mangroves Cover in India: West Bengal > Gujarat > Andamans and Nicobar Islands > Adhara Pradesh > Maharashtra

- In India, Mangroves are protected under Environmental Protection Act 1986 and Coastal Zone Regulations.

Mangrove Forests

**Total area of Mangrove forests:
14.79 million hectare**

Indonesia **19%**
Brazil **9%**
Nigeria **7%**
Mexico **6%**
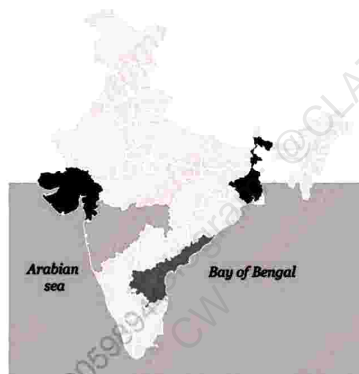
India has about **3%** *of the
total Mangrove cover in South Asia*

Mangrove in India:
*Top three states showing
increase in mangrove cover.*
Odisha **8 sqkm**
Maharashtra **4 sqkm**
Karnataka **3 sqkm**

Arabian sea | Bay of Bengal

**Mangrove cover in
different states/UTs:**
West Bengal **42.30%**
Gujarat **23.57%**
Andaman & Nicobar **12.33%**
Andhra Pradesh **8%**
Maharashtra **6.49%**

Initiatives for Mangroves: India

- **MISHTI Initiative for Mangroves**
  - MISHTI stands for Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes.
  - Announced in Union Budget 2023 – 24.
  - For Mangrove Plantations along Coastline and on Salt Pan Lands.

- **SAIME Initiative**
  - SAIME stands Sustainable Aquaculture In Mangrove Ecosystem
  - Started in 2019, Community-based Initiative of Sustainable Shrimp Cultivation.
  - Under this, Farmers have taken up Cultivation of Shrimp at 30 hectares in West Bengal. Additionally, they are restoring Mangroves.

Government initiatives for Mangroves -

- **Mangrove Breakthrough**
  - Launched at COP27 Sharm El Sheikh (Egypt)
  - By Global Mangrove Alliance

Global Forest Resource Assessment, 2020

- *113 Countries have Mangrove Forests covering an estimated 14.79 million hectares.*
- *Largest Mangrove Area: Asia (5.55 mh) followed by Africa (3.24 mh), North and Central America (2.57 mh), South America (2.13 mh).*
- *Mangrove Hotspot: Indonesia (19 %), Brazil (9 %), Nigeria (7 %), Mexico (6%).*

- In collaboration with UN Climate Change High-level Champions.
- Built on Breakthrough Agenda launched at COP26 Glasgow.
  - Aim: To secure future of 15 million hectares of mangroves globally by 2030.
    - Ensuring sustainable long-term Finance for All Existing Mangroves by achieving investment of 4 billion USD by 2030.

- **Mangrove Alliance for Climate**
  - During COP27 Climate Summit in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, UAE and Indonesia announced "Mangrove Alliance for Climate.
  - Members: UAE, Indonesia, India, Sri Lanka, Australia, Japan, Spain.
  - Aim: To Educate and Spread Awareness worldwide on Tole of Mangroves in curbing Global Warming and its potential as a Solution for Climate Change.

- **Blue Carbon Initiative**
  - Launched at UNFCCC 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) in Paris in 2015.
  - Focused on mitigating Climate Change through Conservation and Restoration of Coastal and Marine Ecosystems
  - Coordinated By: Conservation International (CI), IUCN and Inter-Governmental Oceanographic Commission-UNESCO (IOC-UNESCO).

- **Global Mangrove Watch (GMW)**
  - Online Platform that provides Remote Sensing Data and Real Time Information about Changes and Tools for monitoring Mangroves across the world.
  - Established in 2011.
  - Under Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's (JAXA) Kyoto & Carbon Initiative by Aberystwyth University.
  - Aim: To provide Open Access Geospatial Information about Mangrove Extent and changes to Ramsar Convention on Wetlands
  - 1st GMW Baseline Maps were released in 2018 at Ramsar COP13.

Pepper it With ● Coastal regulatory zones in India , Oil spills in Oceans and its solutions.

> ### *Global Mangrove Alliance*
> - *Formed in 2018 at World Ocean Summit.*
> - *By Conservation International (CI), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), Wetlands International, World Wildlife Fund (WWF)*

> ### *Blue Carbon*
> *Carbon captured by Living Organisms in Oceans and stored as Biomass and Sediments in Mangroves, Salt Marshes and Seagrass Beds.*

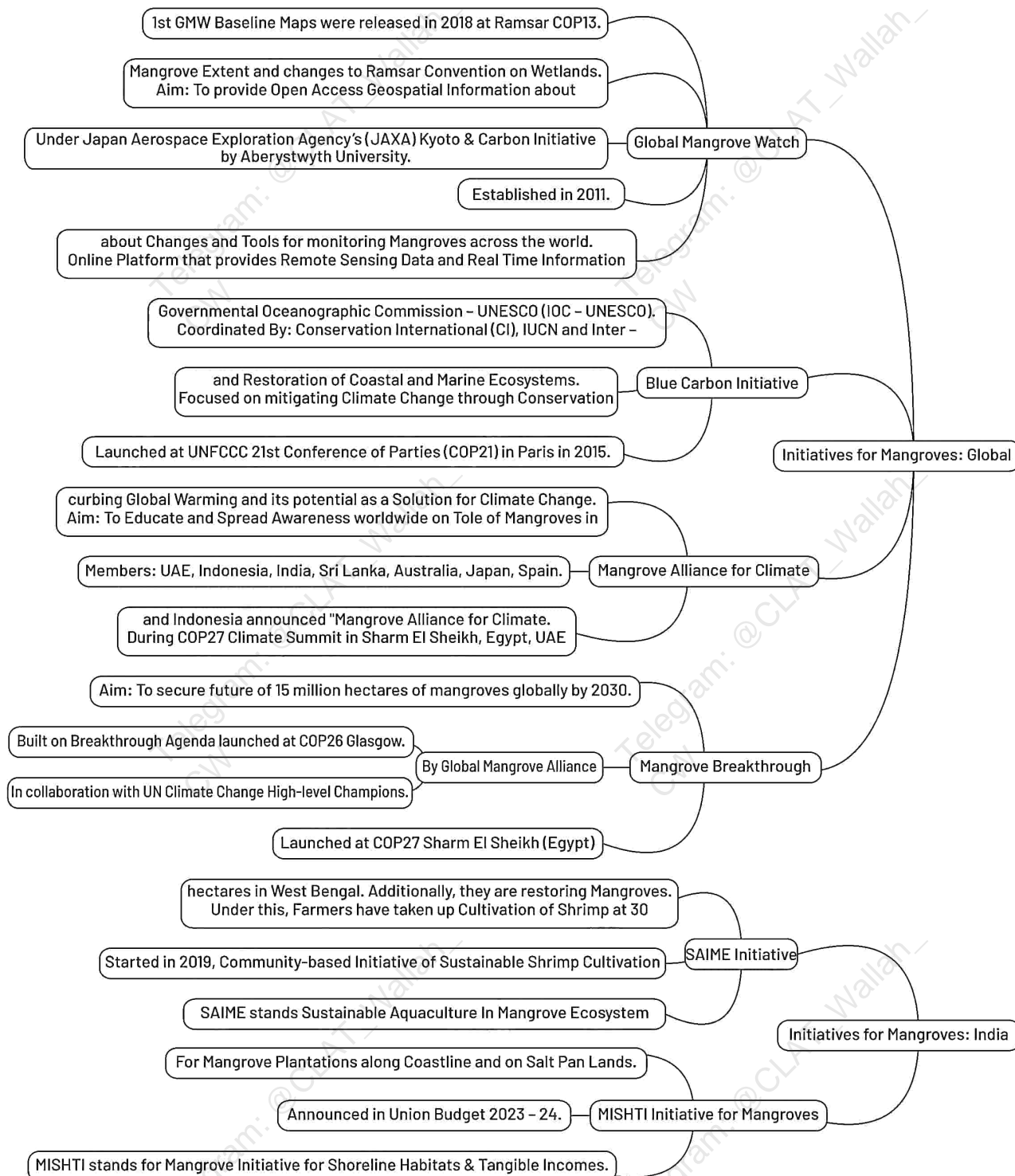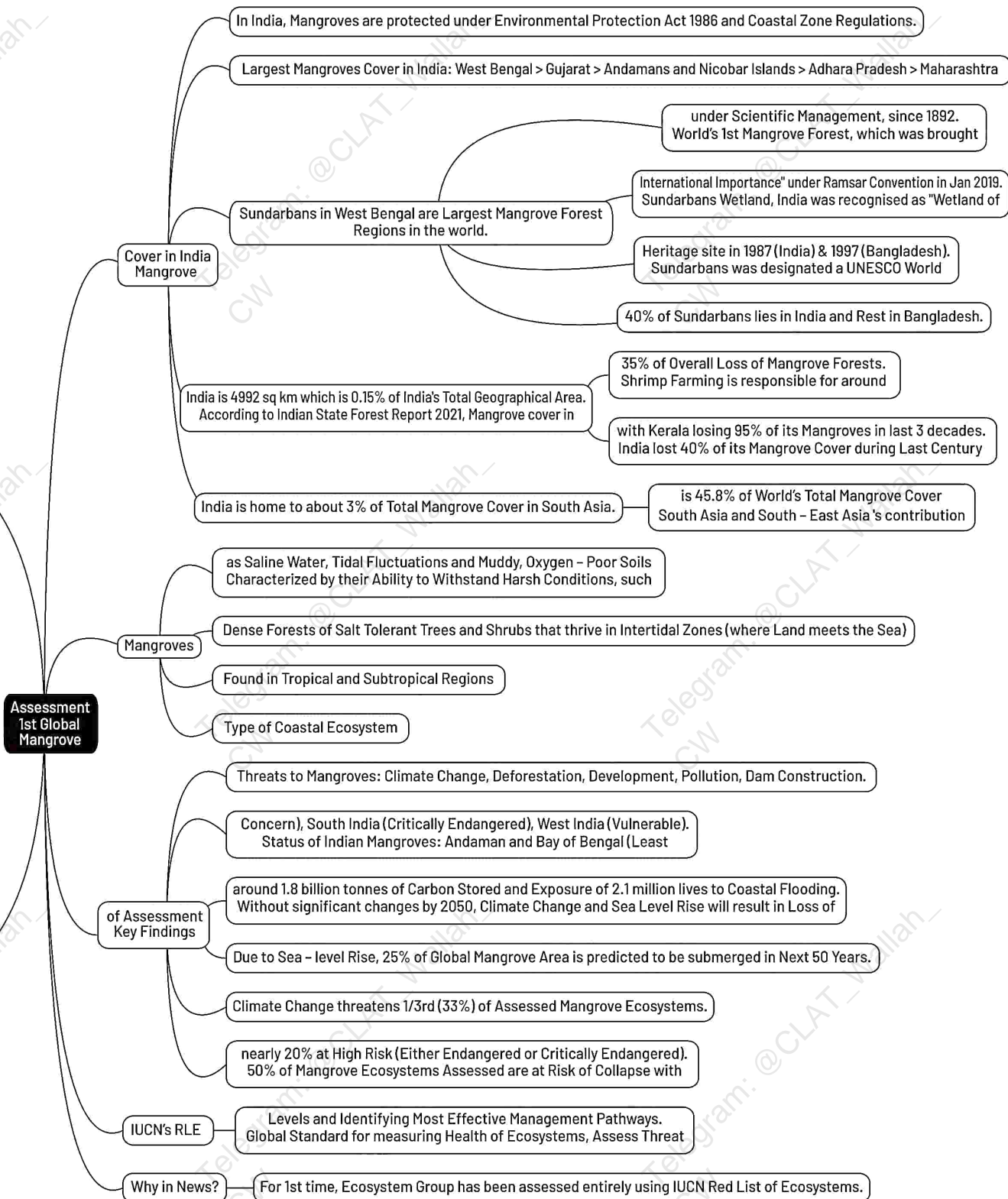> ### *International Day for Conservation of Mangrove Ecosystem*
> - *Celebrated every year on 26 July.*
> - *Aim: To raise Awareness of Importance of Mangrove Ecosystems as "Unique, Special and Vulnerable Ecosystem" and to promote Solutions for their Sustainable Management, Conservation and Uses.*
> - *Adopted By: UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) in 2015.*

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What percentage of assessed mangrove ecosystems are at risk of collapse?
    (a) 25%   (b) 33%   (c) 50%   (d) 75%

2. What is the predicted percentage of global mangrove area to be submerged in the next 50 years due to sea-level rise?
    (a) 15%   (b) 25%   (c) 33%   (d) 50%

3. Which of the following is NOT listed as a threat to mangroves?
    (a) Climate change   (b) Deforestation   (c) Overfishing   (d) Pollution

4. What percentage of the planet's surface do mangroves cover?
    (a) 0.1%   (b) 1%   (c) 3%   (d) 5%

5. How much carbon can mangroves potentially store per hectare compared to terrestrial forests?
    (a) 2x more   (b) 5x more   (c) 10x more   (d) 15x more

6. What percentage of India's total geographical area is covered by mangroves?
    (a) 0.15%   (b) 1.5%   (c) 3%   (d) 15%

7. Which state in India has the largest mangrove cover?
    (a) Gujarat   (b) West Bengal   (c) Andhra Pradesh   (d) Maharashtra

8. What does MISHTI stand for in the context of mangrove initiatives?
    (a) Mangrove Initiative for Sustainable Habitats & Tropical Islands
    (b) Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes
    (c) Mangrove Improvement Scheme for Habitat & Terrestrial Integration
    (d) Mangrove Implementation for Sustainable Habitats & Tropical Interventions

9. Which of the following is NOT a member of the Mangrove Alliance for Climate?
    (a) India   (b) UAE   (c) Brazil   (d) Japan

10. When was the Blue Carbon Initiative launched?
    (a) 2011   (b) 2015   (c) 2018   (d) 2023

11. What is the total area of mangrove forests globally?
    (a) 12.79 million hectares   (b) 13.79 million hectares
    (c) 14.79 million hectares   (d) 15.79 million hectares

1st GMW Baseline Maps were released in 2018 at Ramsar COP13.

Mangrove Extent and changes to Ramsar Convention on Wetlands.
Aim: To provide Open Access Geospatial Information about

Under Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency's (JAXA) Kyoto & Carbon Initiative
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Online Platform that provides Remote Sensing Data and Real Time Information

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Focused on mitigating Climate Change through Conservation

Blue Carbon Initiative

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Initiatives for Mangroves: Global

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Mangrove Alliance for Climate

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Mangrove Breakthrough

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SAIME Initiative

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For Mangrove Plantations along Coastline and on Salt Pan Lands.

Announced in Union Budget 2023 – 24.

MISHTI Initiative for Mangroves

MISHTI stands for Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes.

Assessment 1st Global Mangrove

Mangrove Cover in India

- In India, Mangroves are protected under Environmental Protection Act 1986 and Coastal Zone Regulations.

- Largest Mangroves Cover in India: West Bengal > Gujarat > Andamans and Nicobar Islands > Adhara Pradesh > Maharashtra

- Sundarbans in West Bengal are Largest Mangrove Forest Regions in the world.
  - under Scientific Management, since 1892. World's 1st Mangrove Forest, which was brought
  - International Importance" under Ramsar Convention in Jan 2019. Sundarbans Wetland, India was recognised as "Wetland of
  - Heritage site in 1987 (India) & 1997 (Bangladesh). Sundarbans was designated a UNESCO World
  - 40% of Sundarbans lies in India and Rest in Bangladesh.

- India is 4992 sq km which is 0.15% of India's Total Geographical Area. According to Indian State Forest Report 2021, Mangrove cover in
  - 35% of Overall Loss of Mangrove Forests. Shrimp Farming is responsible for around
  - with Kerala losing 95% of its Mangroves in last 3 decades. India lost 40% of its Mangrove Cover during Last Century

- India is home to about 3% of Total Mangrove Cover in South Asia.
  - is 45.8% of World's Total Mangrove Cover South Asia and South – East Asia's contribution

Mangroves

- Characterized by their Ability to Withstand Harsh Conditions, such as Saline Water, Tidal Fluctuations and Muddy, Oxygen – Poor Soils

- Dense Forests of Salt Tolerant Trees and Shrubs that thrive in Intertidal Zones (where Land meets the Sea)

- Found in Tropical and Subtropical Regions

- Type of Coastal Ecosystem

Key Findings of Assessment

- Threats to Mangroves: Climate Change, Deforestation, Development, Pollution, Dam Construction.

- Status of Indian Mangroves: Andaman and Bay of Bengal (Least Concern), South India (Critically Endangered), West India (Vulnerable).

- Without significant changes by 2050, Climate Change and Sea Level Rise will result in Loss of around 1.8 billion tonnes of Carbon Stored and Exposure of 2.1 million lives to Coastal Flooding.

- Due to Sea – level Rise, 25% of Global Mangrove Area is predicted to be submerged in Next 50 Years.

- Climate Change threatens 1/3rd (33%) of Assessed Mangrove Ecosystems.

- 50% of Mangrove Ecosystems Assessed are at Risk of Collapse with nearly 20% at High Risk (Either Endangered or Critically Endangered).

IUCN's RLE

- Global Standard for measuring Health of Ecosystems, Assess Threat Levels and Identifying Most Effective Management Pathways.

Why in News?

- For 1st time, Ecosystem Group has been assessed entirely using IUCN Red List of Ecosystems.

12. Which country has the highest percentage of mangrove cover according to the pie chart?
    (a) Brazil   (b) Indonesia   (c) Nigeria   (d) Mexico

13. What percentage of mangrove cover does India have in South Asia?
    (a) 1%   (b) 3%   (c) 5%   (d) 7%

14. Which Indian state shows the highest increase in mangrove cover?
    (a) Maharashtra   (b) Karnataka   (c) Odisha   (d) Gujarat

15. What percentage of mangrove cover does West Bengal have in India?
    (a) 23.57%   (b) 32.30%   (c) 42.30%   (d) 52.30%

16. When was the Global Mangrove Watch (GMW) established?
    (a) 2011   (b) 2015   (c) 2018   (d) 2023

17. What percentage of the Sundarbans lies in India?
    (a) 30%   (b) 40%   (c) 50%   (d) 60%

18. Which initiative aims to secure the future of 15 million hectares of mangroves globally by 2030?
    (a) MISHTI   (b) SAIME
    (c) Mangrove Breakthrough   (d) Blue Carbon Initiative

19. What percentage of overall mangrove forest loss is attributed to shrimp farming?
    (a) 25%   (b) 35%   (c) 45%   (d) 55%

20. Under which act are mangroves protected in India?
    (a) Wildlife Protection Act 1972   (b) Forest Conservation Act 1980
    (c) Environmental Protection Act 1986   (d) Biodiversity Act 2002

Cyclone Remal

Why in News?

India Meteorological Department has issued a warning for a potential severe cyclonic storm, named Cyclone Remal, that could impact Coasts of West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Explained:

Tropical cyclones, also known as hurricanes or typhoons, are intense storm systems characterized by high winds, heavy rainfall, and low-pressure centers. They form over warm ocean waters and can cause widespread destruction upon making landfall. The effects of tropical cyclones include severe flooding, property damage, and loss of life. These storms disrupt communities, destroy infrastructure, and lead to economic losses in affected regions.

In addition to immediate physical damage, tropical cyclones can have long-term impacts. They can lead to displacement of populations, waterborne diseases, and prolonged recovery periods for affected areas. Climate change is exacerbating the frequency and intensity of these storms, increasing the urgency for improved preparedness and resilience measures.

Way to marks:

Cyclone Remal

- "Remal", meaning "Sand" in Arabic.
- The name "Remal" in List of Tropical Cyclones is given by Oman.
- Origin: Bay of Bengal (BoB)
  - It is 1st Cyclone to hit Bay of Bengal Region this 2024 Pre – Monsoon Season.
- Factors Contributing to Formation
  - Depression (Area of Low Pressure characterised by circulating Winds and Atmospheric Instability) has formed over Central Bay of Bengal, serving as Genesis for Cyclone Remal
  - Bay of Bengal, experiences Water Temperatures Higher (2–3°C) Warmer than Average
  - Madden Julian Oscillation, a Band of Clouds moving Eastward, along with Winds and Warm Ocean Waters, is currently moving South of Bay of Bengal.
  - These winds play a role in initiating cyclones due to their rotational effect.

Tropical Cyclone

- One of World's Most Destructive Natural Disasters.
- Develop in Regions between Tropics of Capricorn and Cancer.

- Form over Warm Tropical Oceans and Intensify.

- Warm Moist Air rises Up and Away from Ocean Surface, creating an Area of Low Pressure.

- It causes Air from Surrounding Areas with Higher Pressure to move towards Low – Pressure Area.

- This leads to Warming Up of Air and causes it to Rise Above.

- As Air Rises & Cools, Water in Air forms Clouds.

Cyclone

- *Type of Low – Pressure Environment with Rapid Inward Air Circulation.*

- *In Northern Hemisphere, Air flows "Counter – Clockwise", while in Southern Hemisphere, it circulates "Clockwise".*

Related Facts

- *The word Cyclone comes from Greek word "Cyclos", which means "Snake Coils".*
  o *"Henry Paddington" invented the term "Cyclone".*

- *World Meteorological Organisation uses the term "Tropical Cyclone" to cover Weather Systems in which winds exceed "Gale Force" (Min 34 knots or 63 kph).*

Favorable Conditions

- *Large Area of Water Surface with Temp above 27° C.*
- *Coriolis Force is Strong enough to form a Cyclonic Vortex.*
- *Variations in Vertical Wind Speed are Minor.*
- *Weak Low-Pressure Area or Low-level Cyclonic Circulation already exists.*
- *Above sea level system, there should be a Higher Divergence.*

Tropical Cyclone: Formation
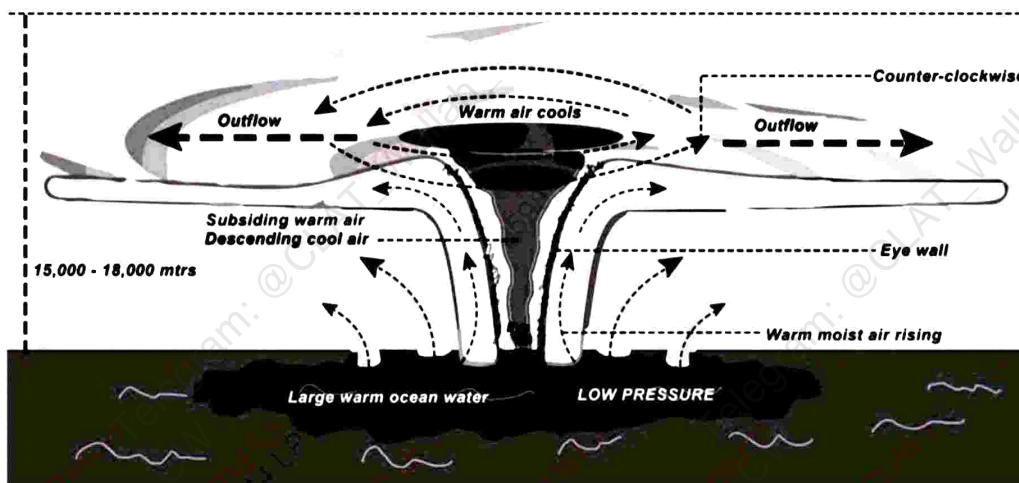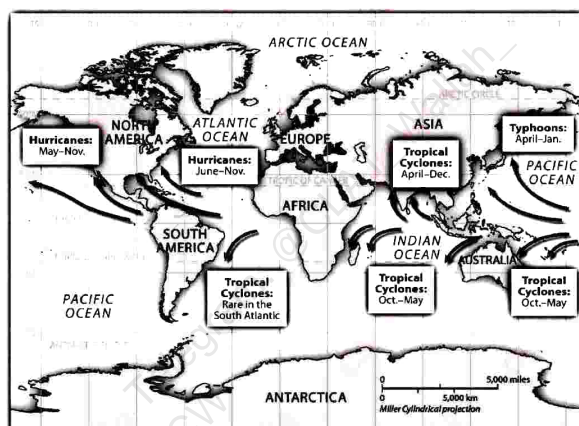
Worldwide Terminology for Cyclone	
Terms	**Regions**
Typhoons	China Sea and Pacific Ocean
Hurricanes	West Indian Islands in the Caribbean Sea and Atlantic Ocean
Tornados	Guinea Lands of West Africa and Southern USA
Willy-Willies	North-Western Australia
Tropical Cyclones	Indian Ocean
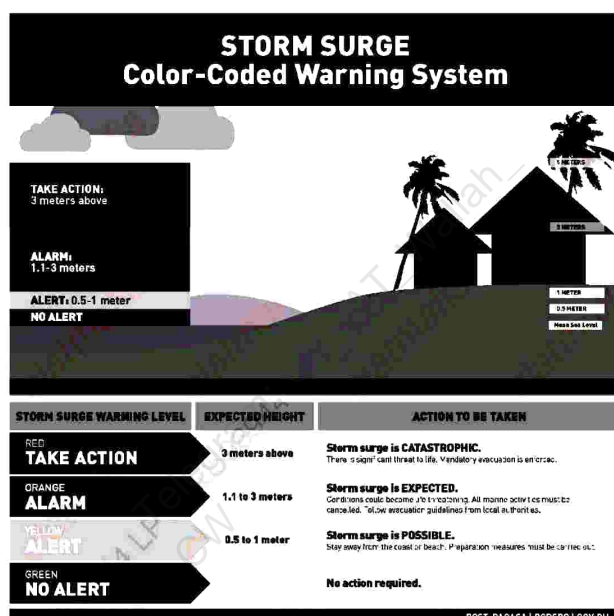
India Meteorological Department Tropical Cyclone Intensity Scale

Category	Sustained winds (3-min average)
Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm	90–119 kt 166–220 km/h
Very Severe Cyclonic Storm	64–89 kt 118–165 km/h
Severe Cyclonic Storm	48–63 kt 89–117 km/h
Cyclonic Storm	34–47 kt 63–88 km/h
Deep Depression	28–33 kt 51–59 km/h
Depression	17–27 kt 31–50 km/h

Naming of Cyclones

- "World Meteorological Organization" (WMO) maintains a "List of Names" that are appropriate for Each Tropical Cyclone Basin.

- 6 Regional Specialised Meteorological Centres (RSMCs) and 5 Regional Tropical Cyclone Warning Centres (TCWCs) mandated for issuing "Advisories and Naming of Tropical Cyclones".

- 5 Regional TCWCs are:
  o ESCAP / WMO Typhoon Committee
  o WMO / ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones

Related Facts

- *"Clement Wragge" is said to have pioneered "Naming of Tropical Cyclones" in late 1800s.*

- *"WMO / ESCAP" is responsible for Naming of Cyclones in Indian Ocean.*
  o *IMD is 1 of 6 RSMCs to provide "Tropical Cyclone & Storm Surge Advisories" to under "WMO / ESCAP".*

- *"Myanmar" suggested the name for "Cyclone Michaung".*
  o *Michaung means "Strength and Resilience".*

- o RA I Tropical Cyclone Committee
- o RA V Tropical Cyclone Committee
- o RA IV Hurricane Committee
- o RA V Tropical Cyclone Committee
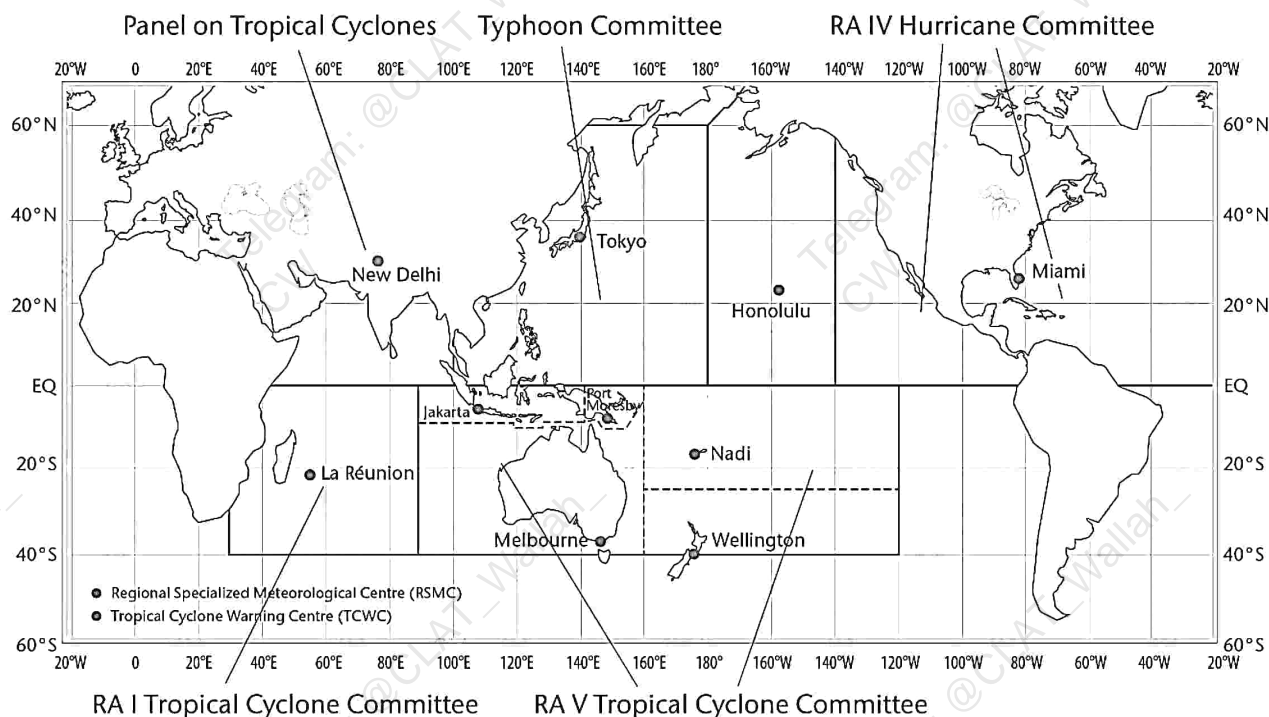
WMO / ESCAP

- "Inter – Governmental Regional Body" jointly established by "World Meteorological Organization" (WMO) and "UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia – Pacific" (ESCAP) in "1972".

- Members: 13 Countries
  - o Bangladesh, India, Iran, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

- They contribute to a "Set of Names" which are assigned sequentially whenever a cyclonic storm develops.

World Meteorological Organization

- *Type: Inter – Governmental Organization*

- *Established: 23rd March, 1950 (WMO Convention).*

- *Specialized Agency of UN for Meteorology, Operational Hydrology and Geophysical Sciences.*

- o *Originated from International Meteorological Organization which was established after "1873 Vienna International Meteorological Congress".*

- *Members: 192 States*

- *HQ: Geneva (Switzerland)*

Related Facts

- *"Only Women's Names" were included in Original Lists.*
  - *"Men's Names" were 1ˢᵗ introduced in "1979".*
- *Australian Minister of Science "Bill Morrison" decided to start Naming Storms after both Male and Female Names.*
- *Cyclone Name's Maximum Length will be "8 Letters".*

India Meteorological Department

- *Established: 1875*
- *"National Meteorological Service" of India*
- *Works under Ministry of Earth Sciences (Kiren Rijiju)*
- *Head: Director General of Meteorology*
- *6 Regional Centres: Mumbai, Chennai, New Delhi, Calcutta, Nagpur, Guwahati*
- *HQ: New Delhi*

ESCAP

- *ESCAP stands for Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific.*
- *Established: 1947*
- *Regional Commission of UN Economic & Social Council.*
- *Members: 53 States and 9 Associate States.*
- *Most Inclusive Inter – Governmental Platform in Asia – Pacific Region.*
- *HQ: Bangkok (Thailand)*

Pepper it With

- Effect of Global Warming on Cyclones , Trends of Cyclones in 20th century.

For more exam related videos and guidance, scan the code to join our YouTube Channel

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What does "Remal" mean in Arabic?
   (a) Wind   (b) Storm   (c) Sand   (d) Water

2. Which country gave the name "Remal" to the cyclone?
   (a) India   (b) Oman   (c) Bangladesh   (d) Sri Lanka

3. Where did Cyclone Remal originate?
   (a) Arabian Sea   (b) Bay of Bengal (c) Indian Ocean (d) South China Sea

4. What is the temperature difference in the Bay of Bengal compared to the average during Cyclone Remal's formation?
   (a) 1-2°C warmer (b) 2-3°C warmer   (c) 3-4°C warmer (d) 4-5°C warmer

5. Which phenomenon is described as a band of clouds moving eastward that contributes to cyclone formation?
   (a) El Niño   (b) La Niña
   (c) Madden Julian Oscillation   (d) Indian Ocean Dipole

6. In which region do tropical cyclones typically develop?
   (a) Between the Arctic and Antarctic Circles   (b) Between the Tropics of Capricorn and Cancer
   (c) Along the Equator   (d) In temperate zones

7. What forms in the middle of a cyclone as wind rotation speed increases?
   (a) A vortex   (b) An eye   (c) A funnel   (d) A spiral

8. Which organization maintains the list of names for tropical cyclones?
   (a) United Nations   (b) World Meteorological Organization
   (c) NASA   (d) NOAA

9. How many Regional Specialized Meteorological Centres (RSMCs) are mandated for naming tropical cyclones?
   (a) 4   (b) 5   (c) 6   (d) 7

10. In which year was the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones established?
    (a) 1970   (b) 1972   (c) 1975   (d) 1980

11. How many countries are members of the WMO/ESCAP Panel on Tropical Cyclones?
    (a) 10   (b) 11   (c) 12   (d) 13

12. What is the highest category of cyclone according to the India Meteorological Department scale?
    (a) Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm   (b) Very Severe Cyclonic Storm
    (c) Super Cyclonic Storm   (d) Catastrophic Cyclonic Storm

13. What wind speed range corresponds to a "Severe Cyclonic Storm"?
    (a) 34-47 kt   (b) 48-63 kt   (c) 64-89 kt   (d) 90-119 kt

14. At what storm surge height does the warning system indicate "TAKE ACTION"?
    (a) 0.5 to 1 meter   (b) 1.1 to 3 meters
    (c) 3 meters above   (d) Below 0.5 meters

15. What is the wind speed range for a "Deep Depression" according to the IMD scale?
    (a) 17-27 kt   (b) 28-33 kt   (c) 34-47 kt   (d) 48-63 kt

16. Which of the following is NOT one of the Regional Tropical Cyclone Warning Centres mentioned?
    (a) ESCAP / WMO Typhoon Committee   (b) RA I Tropical Cyclone Committee
    (c) RA IV Hurricane Committee   (d) Atlantic Hurricane Center

17. What is the first step in tropical cyclone formation?
    (a) Formation of the eye   (b) Warm moist air rising from the ocean surface
    (c) Wind rotation   (d) Cloud formation

18. Which factor is NOT mentioned as contributing to Cyclone Remal's formation?
    (a) Depression over Bay of Bengal   (b) Higher water temperatures
    (c) Madden Julian Oscillation   (d) El Niño conditions

19. What action is recommended when the storm surge is between 1.1 to 3 meters?
    (a) No action required   (b) Alert   (c) Alarm   (d) Take action

20. What is the wind speed range for an "Extremely Severe Cyclonic Storm"?
    (a) 90-119 kt   (b) 120 kt or more   (c) 64-89 kt   (d) 48-63 kt

Biological Diversity (Amendment) Act, 2023

Why in News?

2023 Amendments to India's Biological Diversity Act of 2002 has caused a debate concerning Bio – Diversity Protection and India's Responsibilities as a signatory to Kunming – Montreal Framework.

Explained:

The debate around the recent amendments to the Biodiversity Act focuses on several key concerns. Originally, the Act required approval from the National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) for intellectual property rights (IPR) related to biological resources so that local communities are not left aside or sued for using the natural herbs and ensuring fair benefits to local communities[Many medical practitioners take the clue of medicinal properties of herb from tribes and then have a patent for herb on their name. they then sue the tribal community who had actually provided for the medical information to the company this is known as biopiracy]. The amendments, however, only mandate registration before granting approvals, which critics argue weakens the control over the use of these resources. Additionally, exempting codified traditional knowledge from benefit-sharing mechanisms could undermine the fair distribution of benefits to indigenous communities.

Furthermore, allowing AYUSH practitioners and related industries to access biological resources without prior approval raises fears of unchecked commercial exploitation, potentially depriving local communities of rightful compensation. The decriminalization of offenses, replacing imprisonment with civil penalties, also sparks concern that the deterrent effect of stricter punishments will be lost, leading to more violations and less protection for biodiversity and traditional knowledge.

Way to marks:

- In 2022, at United Nations Biodiversity Conference, countries all over the world adopted Kunming-Montreal Framework to enhance Bio-Diversity Protection and Conservation.

- Countries adopted calls to protect 30% of All Ecosystems by 2030, to Protect Biodiversity and Genetic Diversity & ensure Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits of Traditional Knowledge with Local and Indigenous Communities that steward this knowledge.

Amendments under Scrutiny

- No Longer Mandating Approval from National Biodiversity Authority for IPR.
  - Only requiring them to be Registered with Authority before Granting Approvals
    - Under 2002 Act, Approvals from National Biodiversity Authority (NBA) were required before applying for Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) related to Biological Resources.

- Exemption of codified traditional knowledge from benefit – sharing mechanism and stringent regulatory oversight has also raised further concerns.
  - These changes undermine the Principle of Fair and Equitable Benefit-Sharing, which is central to both Original Act and Nagoya Protocol.
- By allowing AYUSH Practitioners and related Industries to access Biological Resources Without Prior Approval
  - Amendments open door to Commercial Exploitation Without Adequate Compensation to Local Communities that hold Traditional Knowledge.

GM CROPS IN INDIA A PRIMER

What is a GM crop?
A crop which has a gene artificially inserted into it from another species, even unrelated, to give it some desired properties. GM crops are mostly either pest-resistant or herbicide-tolerant

Are there other GM crops in India?
No, the government has not approved commercial cultivation of other GM crops, though efforts have been made for brinjal and mustard

When did India get its first GM crop?
The first GM crop variety approved for commercialisation was Bt cotton. Bollgard-I, which provided immunity against the pink bollworm and developed by Monsanto, was given the go ahead in 2002. Monsanto released Bollgard-II in 2006. India has become the world's largest producer of cotton partly due to Bt cotton, which accounts for over 90% of the total cotton acreage in the country

- Decriminalization of Offenses: Amendments now replace Imprisonment with Civil Penalties.
  - Previously, Violations could result in Imprisonment and Fines.

Nagoya Protocol

- Supplementary Agreement to Convention on Biological Diversity.
- Adopted in 2010 in Nagoya (Japan) and Entered into force in 2014.
- Provides a Transparent Legal Framework for Effective Implementation of One of 3 Objectives of CBD: Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits arising out of Utilization of Genetic Resources.

> *National Biodiversity Authority*
> - *Type: Statutory Body*
> - *Established in 2003.*
> - *Aim: To implement India's Biological Diversity Act (2002).*

Biological Diversity Act, 2002

- To achieve objectives of United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), 1992.
- Provides a framework for Access to Biological Resources and Sharing Benefits arising out of such Access and Use.
- In – line with Nagoya Protocol on Access and Benefit Sharing.

Rising Global Temperatures

- The World is witnessing a concerning trend of Record – Breaking Temperatures across the Globe, exacerbated by Global Warming.
- From scorching 56.7°C recorded in Death Valley, California over a century ago to the recent 52.9°C reading in Delhi, Temperature Extremes are becoming more prevalent as the Planet continues to heat up.
- Mungeshpur Weather Station in Delhi recorded a record High Temperature of 52.9°C, Highest ever in India.
- However, India Meteorological Department (IMD) later clarified that Extreme Temperature was due to an Error in Sensor or Local Factors.

Historical Context of Global Temperature Records

- Highest Temperature ever recorded on Earth was 56.7°C in Death Valley, California, in 1913.

- United Kingdom: Surpassed 40°C for 1st time in July 2022.

- China: Recorded its Highest Temperature of 52°C in a North – Western Town last year.

- Europe: Sicily (Italy) reached 48.8°C in 2021, a record for the Continent.

- India: Rajasthan's Phalodi recorded Highest Temperature of 51°C in 2016.

> *Global Trends*
> - *Nearly 40% of Earth experienced its Highest-ever Daily Temperature between 2013 and 2023.*
> - *Global Average Temperatures are currently about 1.61°C Higher than Pre – Industrial Levels.*

Global Warming and its Effect

- Refers to Long-Term Increase in Earth's Average Surface Temperature due to Human Activities.

- Primarily Emission of Green – House Gases (GHG) like Carbon Dioxide (CO2) and Methane (CH4).

- GHGs and Temperatures: GHGs Trap Heat in Earth's Atmosphere, preventing it from escaping into Space.

- Global Temperature Rise: Planet's Average Surface Temperature has risen about 1°C since Late 19th Century.
  - Period from May 2023 to April 2024 was Warmest 12 – Month Period, with Global Temperatures about 1.61°C Above Pre – Industrial Levels.

- India's Warming is Less than Global Average: Indian Temperatures have increased by 0.7 degrees Celsius since 1900, while Global Land Temperatures have risen by 1.59°C.
  - When including Oceans, Global Temperatures are now at least 1.1°C Higher than Pre – Industrial Levels.

- Global Warming is causing an Increase in Global Temperatures and Frequency of Heatwaves.
  - UHIs are Metropolitan Areas significantly Warmer than Surrounding Regions due to Heat – Absorbing Surfaces and Energy Use.

Pepper it With

- Forest Rights amendment act Controversy, Patanjali Controversy.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What framework was adopted at the United Nations Biodiversity Conference in 2022?
    (a) Paris Agreement   (b) Kyoto Protocol
    (c) Kunming-Montreal Framework   (d) Nagoya Protocol

2. What percentage of ecosystems does the Kunming-Montreal Framework aim to protect by 2030?
    (a) 20%   (b) 25%   (c) 30%   (d) 35%

3. Under the 2002 Act, what was required before applying for Intellectual Property Rights related to Biological Resources?
    (a) Registration with local authorities   (b) Approval from National Biodiversity Authority
    (c) Consent from indigenous communities   (d) Payment of fees

4. What change has been made regarding offenses in the new amendments?
    (a) Increased imprisonment terms
    (b) Higher fines
    (c) Replacement of imprisonment with civil penalties
    (d) No changes to penalties

5. Where was the Nagoya Protocol adopted?
    (a) Tokyo, Japan   (b) Nagoya, Japan   (c) Kyoto, Japan   (d) Osaka, Japan

6. When did the Nagoya Protocol enter into force?
    (a) 2010   (b) 2012   (c) 2014   (d) 2016

7. What is the main objective of the Nagoya Protocol?
    (a) Reduce carbon emissions
    (b) Protect endangered species
    (c) Fair and equitable sharing of benefits from genetic resources
    (d) Promote sustainable agriculture

8. What is the highest temperature ever recorded on Earth?
    (a) 52.9°C   (b) 54.4°C   (c) 56.7°C   (d) 58.3°C

9. Where was the highest temperature in India recorded?
    (a) Delhi   (b) Rajasthan   (c) Gujarat   (d) Madhya Pradesh

10. What temperature did the United Kingdom surpass for the first time in July 2022?
    (a) 35°C   (b) 38°C   (c) 40°C   (d) 42°C

11. What is the primary cause of global warming according to the text?
    (a) Solar radiation   (b) Volcanic eruptions
    (c) Emission of greenhouse gases   (d) Deforestation

12. By how much has the planet's average surface temperature risen since the late 19th century?
    (a) 0.5°C   (b) 1°C   (c) 1.5°C   (d) 2°C

13. How much have Indian temperatures increased since 1900?
    (a) 0.5°C   (b) 0.7°C   (c) 1.1°C   (d) 1.5°C

14. What does UHI stand for in the context of urban areas?
    (a) Urban Heat Index   (b) Urban Humidity Indicator
    (c) Urban Heat Island   (d) Urban Heatwave Intensity

15. Which of the following is NOT mentioned as a greenhouse gas in the text?
    (a) Carbon Dioxide   (b) Methane   (c) Nitrous Oxide   (d) Water Vapor

16. What is the warmest 12-month period mentioned in the text?
    (a) May 2022 to April 2023   (b) May 2023 to April 2024
    (c) January 2023 to December 2023   (d) June 2022 to May 2023

17. What temperature did Phalodi in Rajasthan record in 2016?
    (a) 49°C   (b) 50°C   (c) 51°C   (d) 52°C

18. Which country recorded its highest temperature of 52°C in a north-western town last year?
    (a) India   (b) Pakistan   (c) China   (d) Iran

19. What temperature did Sicily, Italy reach in 2021, setting a record for Europe?
    (a) 46.8°C   (b) 47.8°C   (c) 48.8°C   (d) 49.8°C

20. According to the text, how much higher are global temperatures now compared to pre-industrial levels when including oceans?
    (a) At least 0.9°C   (b) At least 1.1°C   (c) At least 1.3°C   (d) At least 1.5°C

United Nations
Climate Change
COP 29

November 2024

UNFCCC

COP 29: Focus on Peace and Climate Solutions

Why in News?

Azerbaijan is Host of this Year's United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP 29).

It wants to prevent Geopolitical Tensions from affecting the talks.

Upcoming COP 29 (in Nov 2024) will focus on promoting "Peace" and a "Truce" to allow Countries to concentrate on Climate Solutions amid Ongoing Conflicts.

Explained:

The Conference of Parties (COP) for the environment is a global summit under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). Held annually, it brings together representatives from nearly 200 countries to discuss and negotiate actions to combat climate change. The COP aims to assess progress, set targets, and enhance cooperation on climate policies.

Each COP meeting addresses critical issues such as greenhouse gas emissions, climate finance, and adaptation strategies. Notable outcomes include the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, which set binding and non-binding commitments respectively for reducing carbon emissions. The COP serves as a platform for nations to collaborate on safeguarding the environment and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Way to marks:

Conference of the Parties (COP)

- Annual UN Climate Meeting
  - Serve as "Principal International Forums" where Nations convene to "Collectively Combat Climate Crisis".
- At "Rio Earth Summit 1992", 154 Countries signed a "Multi-lateral Treaty" called the "United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change" (UNFCCC).
  - UNFCCC is a Treaty that establishes "Legal Framework for International Cooperation on Climate Change".
  - It came into force in 1994.

Related Facts

- *1987 Montreal Protocol: International Treaty designed to protect Ozone Layer*
- *1991 Bilateral Agreement between US and Canada that helped combat Acid Rain by limiting Emission of Sulphur Dioxide (SO2).*
- *Kyoto Protocol: International Obligations on Set of Rich and Industrialised Countries to Cut their Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Assigned Amounts.*

- Aim: To Stabilise Greenhouse Gas Concentrations at a level that would Prevent Dangerous Anthropogenic (Human – induced) Interference with Climate System.

- Members (Parties): 198

- 1st ever COP (COP – 1) took place in Berlin (Germany) in 1995.
  - COP – 1 entailed discussion on "How to implement the UNFCCC".
  - At COP – 1, an agreement was reached "to meet annually to discuss action on Climate Change and Emissions Reductions".

- COP Meetings aim is to "Review Progress towards Overall Goal of Limiting Climate Change".
  - Annual Conference takes place to discuss a "Global Agreement to Cut Emissions of Greenhouse Gases" in the atmosphere.
  - A Crucial Part of COP is "Review of the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)".
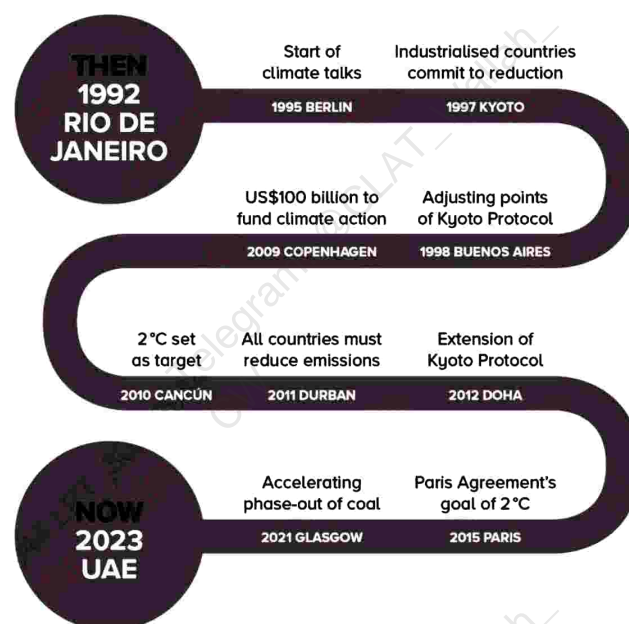
Upcoming COP 29 and Truce Proposal

- Azerbaijan, as Host, will lead 29th Edition of Conference.

- It will build upon agenda set in COP 28 in Dubai.
  - Transitioning Away from Fossil Fuels to achieve Net Zero by 2050.
  - To guide Countries toward Consensus on addressing Climate Crisis.
  - Unfulfilled 2009 Commitment by Developed Countries to provide $100 billion annually to Developing Countries for Climate Action. COP29 is expected to set a New Annual Target above $100 billion and determine whether Funds will be Grants or Loans.

- Truce Proposal – need for Climate Unity despite Geopolitical Divisions
  - Azerbaijan is aiming to shield Annual Talks from Geopolitical Tensions by proposing a 2-Week COP Truce.
  - This initiative, inspired by Olympic Truce, is intended to unite Countries in a Collaborative Effort to address Pressing Issue of Climate Change.

NDCs

- *Climate Action Plans that Countries create to help meet Goals of Paris Agreement.*

- *Self – Defined Pledges that outline how Countries will Reduce Emissions, adapt to Climate Change and secure Funding to support these efforts.*

- *Short – to – Medium Term Plans that must be updated Every 5 Years with More Ambitious Goals based on Each Country's Capabilities.*
  - *Several Countries submitted their Latest NDCs by 2023, with Next Submissions expected by 2028.*

COP 28

- Official Name: 2023 UN Climate Change Conference
- Period: 30 Nov – 12 Dec, 2023
- Host: Expo City, Dubai (UAE)
- COP 28 President: Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber (Minister of Industry & Advanced Technology)
  - UAE President: Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan
- Not Attending Members: US President Joe Biden, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Pope Francis

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Paris Agreement (COP 21)

- *Legally Binding International Treaty on Climate Change*
- *Adopted by 196 Parties*
- *At UN Climate Change Conference in Paris, France in Dec 2015.*
  - *Entered into force on Nov 4, 2016.*
- *Objectives*
  - *Limit Global Warming: Keep Global Warming below 2°C above Pre – Industrial Levels, and pursue efforts to limit it to 1.5°C*
  - *Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions: Significantly Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2100*
  - *Support Countries: Strengthen Countries' Ability to deal with Impacts of Climate Change.*
  - *Financing: Provide Financing to Developing Countries to mitigate Climate Change.*

COP 28

- **Official Name:** 2023 UN Climate Change Conference
- **Period:** 30 Nov – 12 Dec, 2023
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  - UAE President: Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan
- **Not Attending Members:** US President Joe Biden, Chinese President Xi Jinping, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, Pope Francis

Pepper it With

- COP15 and COP28 in CLAT Express December.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What was established at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992?
   (a) The Paris Agreement
   (b) The Kyoto Protocol
   (c) The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
   (d) The Montreal Protocol

2. How many countries initially signed the UNFCCC?
   (a) 134   (b) 144   (c) 154   (d) 164

3. When did the UNFCCC come into force?
   (a) 1992   (b) 1993   (c) 1994   (d) 1995

4. How many members (parties) does the UNFCCC currently have?
   (a) 178   (b) 188   (c) 198   (d) 208

5. Where did the first Conference of the Parties (COP-1) take place?
   (a) Paris   (b) Berlin   (c) New York   (d) Tokyo

6. What year was COP-1 held?
   (a) 1992   (b) 1994   (c) 1995   (d) 1997

7. What is a crucial part of COP meetings?
   (a) Electing new leadership
   (b) Setting carbon prices
   (c) Reviewing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs)
   (d) Allocating research funding

8. Which country will host COP 29?
   (a) UAE   (b) Azerbaijan   (c) Germany   (d) France

9. What was a key focus of COP 28 in Dubai?
   (a) Banning all fossil fuels
   (b) Transitioning away from fossil fuels to achieve Net Zero by 2050
   (c) Increasing fossil fuel production
   (d) Promoting nuclear energy

10. What unfulfilled commitment from 2009 is expected to be addressed at COP 29?
    (a) Banning single-use plastics
    (b) Providing $100 billion annually to developing countries for climate action
    (c) Planting 1 trillion trees
    (d) Achieving 50% renewable energy globally

11. What inspired Azerbaijan's proposed "COP Truce"?
    (a) The Nobel Peace Prize
    (b) The Olympic Truce
    (c) The UN Charter
    (d) The Paris Agreement

12. What is the official name of COP 28?
    (a) 2023 Global Climate Summit
    (b) 2023 UN Climate Change Conference
    (c) 2023 International Environmental Forum
    (d) 2023 World Climate Action Meeting

13. When was COP 28 held?
    (a) October 15-27, 2023
    (b) November 1-14, 2023
    (c) November 30 - December 12, 2023
    (d) December 15-27, 2023

14. Where was COP 28 hosted?
    (a) Abu Dhabi, UAE
    (b) Expo City, Dubai, UAE
    (c) Sharjah, UAE
    (d) Doha, Qatar

15. Who was the COP 28 President?
    (a) Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan
    (b) Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber
    (c) Antonio Guterres
    (d) John Kerry

16. Which of the following leaders did NOT attend COP 28?
    (a) Emmanuel Macron   (b) Narendra Modi   (c) Joe Biden   (d) Rishi Sunak

17. What is the main aim of the UNFCCC?
    (a) To promote economic growth
    (b) To stabilize greenhouse gas concentrations
    (c) To increase fossil fuel production
    (d) To regulate international trade

18. How often do COP meetings typically occur?
    (a) Monthly   (b) Quarterly   (c) Annually   (d) Bi-annually

19. What does COP stand for in the context of these climate meetings?
    (a) Conference of Parliaments
    (b) Council of Presidents
    (c) Conference of the Parties
    (d) Committee on Pollution

20. What is the proposed duration of Azerbaijan's "COP Truce"?
    (a) 1 week   (b) 2 weeks   (c) 1 month   (d) The entire year

World Environment Day 2024

Why in News?

World Environment Day is celebrated on 5th June every year to encourage Awareness and Environmental Protection.

Explained:

World Environment Day, celebrated annually on June 5th, is a global event led by the United Nations to raise awareness and encourage action for environmental protection. Established in 1974, it has grown to become a platform for public outreach, with participation from over 150 countries. Each year, the day focuses on a specific environmental theme, aiming to address pressing ecological issues and promote sustainable practices.

The benefits of World Environment Day are manifold. It fosters global awareness about environmental challenges, such as climate change, deforestation, and pollution, prompting individuals and communities to adopt eco-friendly practices. Additionally, it provides a platform for governments, businesses, and organizations to announce and implement policies aimed at environmental conservation. By galvanizing collective action, World Environment Day contributes to the preservation of natural resources and the promotion of a healthier, more sustainable planet for future generations.

Way to marks:

World Environment Day

- Celebrated annually on June 5th
  - 1st World Environment Day was celebrated in 1973 with theme "Only One Earth".
- Established in 1972 on 1st Day of Stockholm Conference on Human Environment.
- Organized by: United Nations Environment Programme
- Theme 2024: Land Restoration, Desertification and Drought Resilience
- Slogan 2024: Our Land. Our Future. We are #GenerationRestoration".
- WED Host 2024: Saudi Arabia
  - Arab Forum for Environment organized from 3 – 4 June in Riyadh.
  - India hosted 45th celebration of World Environment Day in 2018 under theme "Beat Plastic Pollution".

> **Significance of Land Restoration**
> - *Reverses Environmental Damage*
> - *High Return on Investment*
> - *Boosts Communities*
> - *Strengthens Resilience*
> - *Combats Climate Change*
> - *Protects Biodiversity*

India's Contribution Towards Environmental Sustainability

- **National Mission for Green India 2014**
  - One of 8 Missions under National Action Plan on Climate Change.
  - To increase Forest/Tree Cover on 5 million hectares of Land and improve Quality of Forest/Tree Cover on another 5 million hectares.

- **National Afforestation Programme 2002**
  - Aim: To restore Ecologically Damaged Forests.
  - 21.47 million hectares of Land have been Afforested as of 2020.

- **Nagar Van Yojana (Urban Forest Scheme) 2020**
  - Focuses on developing Mini Urban Forests or "Nagar Vans" within Cities and Towns.
  - Aim: To develop 200 Urban Forests across India in Next Five Years.

- **Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) Funds 2016**
  - Aim: To promote Afforestation and Regeneration Activities etc on Waste, Vacant and Barren Lands.

- **Wetland Conservation**
  - India expanded its Ramsar Site count to 82 as of now.

- **Forest and Wildlife Conservation**
  - India ranks 3rd globally in Net Forest Area Gain over the past 15 years.
  - Forest Cover of India is 713789 sq km, which is 21.71% of Total Geographical Area of India, as per India State of Forest Report 2021.
  - India launched Project Tiger (1973) and 30 years of Project Elephant (1992).
  - "Green Credit Program" has been introduced to incentivize Tree Plantation and Restoration of Degraded Forest Lands.

Related Facts

- *Year 2024 marks 30th anniversary of UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).*
  - *16th Session of Conference of Parties (COP 16) to UNCCD will be held in Riyadh (Saudi Arabia) from Dec 2 to 13, 2024.*
- *UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021 – 2030)*

India's 1st Bio – Sphere in a Tiger Reserve

- *Jai Dhar Gupta and Vijay Dhasmana created India's 1st Biosphere in a Tiger Reserve, called Rajaji Raghati Biosphere within Rajaji National Park (Uttarakhand).*
- *35 – acre Private Forest Initiative aimed at identifying and reviving Rare and Endangered Species of Native Trees while protecting area from Poachers and Mining.*
- *They are developing a 2nd Biosphere above Koyna River in Buffer Zone of Sahyadri Tiger Reserve (Pune, Maharashtra).*

About Mission LIFE

- *Mission LIFE is an India-led global mass movement which aims to nudge individual and collective action to protect and preserve the environment.*
- *It was first introduced in 2021 by Prime Minister Modi at the UN- FCCC's COP 26 in Glasgow.*

Aim

- *To mobilize at least 1 billion Indians and other global citizens to take individual and collective action for protecting and preserving the environment in the period 2022 to 2027.*
- *Within India, at least 80% of all villages and urban local bodies are aimed to become environment-friendly by 2028.*

- **Mangrove Restoration**
  - Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes (MISHTI) was announced in Union Budget 2023 – 24 to promote and conserve Mangroves.
- **Ban on Single – Use Plastic**
  - Introduced amendments to Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 through Plastic Waste Management (Amendment) Rules, 2024.
- **Global Initiatives of India**
  - India is a member of Global Alliance for Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency (GACERE) and Steering Committee of International Resource Panel (IRP).
  - 6th Assembly of International Solar Alliance (ISA) was hosted in New Delhi on 31st October 2023.

ABOUT ISA

- It is an initiative jointly launched by India and France in 2015 on the sidelines of COP-21 of UNFCCC in Paris.
- It was officially established on 6 December 2017, on the entry into force of the Framework Agreement.
- The membership is open to those solar resource-rich States, which lie fully or partially between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn, and are members of the United Nations.
- The First Assembly at Delhi adopted the proposal made by India to expand the scope of membership of the ISA to all members of United Nations. This has not yet entered into force.

Through this initiative, the countries share the collective ambition:

- to address obstacles that stand in the way of rapid and massive scale-up of solar energy;
- to undertake innovative and concerted efforts for reducing the cost of finance and cost of technology for immediate deployment of competitive solar generation; and
- to mobilise more than 1000 Billion US Dollars of investments by 2030.
- accelerate the development and deployment of over 1,000GW of solar generation capacity in member countries.

Pepper it With
- Decreasing millet production in India , Palm Oil and its environmental harms.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. When is World Environment Day celebrated annually?
   (a) May 5th   (b) June 5th   (c) July 5th   (d) August 5th

2. In which year was the first World Environment Day celebrated?
   (a) 1970   (b) 1972   (c) 1973   (d) 1975

3. What is the theme for World Environment Day 2024?
   (a) Beat Plastic Pollution
   (b) Land Restoration, Desertification and Drought Resilience
   (c) Only One Earth
   (d) Biodiversity Conservation

4. Which country is hosting World Environment Day 2024?
   (a) India   (b) Saudi Arabia   (c) United States   (d) France

5. What is the slogan for World Environment Day 2024?
   (a) "Save Our Planet"
   (b) "Green Earth, Clean Earth"
   (c) "Our Land. Our Future. We are #GenerationRestoration"
   (d) "Protect Nature, Protect Life"

6. Which of the following is NOT one of the 8 Missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change?
   (a) National Mission for Green India   (b) National Afforestation Programme
   (c) Nagar Van Yojana   (d) CAMPA Funds

7. How many hectares of land have been afforested under the National Afforestation Programme as of 2020?
   (a) 10.47 million   (b) 15.47 million   (c) 18.47 million   (d) 21.47 million

8. What is the aim of the Nagar Van Yojana (Urban Forest Scheme)?
   (a) To develop 100 Urban Forests across India   (b) To develop 200 Urban Forests across India
   (c) To develop 300 Urban Forests across India   (d) To develop 400 Urban Forests across India

9. How many Ramsar Sites does India have as of now?
   (a) 60   (b) 70   (c) 82   (d) 90

10. What percentage of India's total geographical area is covered by forests, according to the India State of Forest Report 2021?
    (a) 18.71%   (b) 19.71%   (c) 20.71%   (d) 21.71%

11. In which year was Project Tiger launched in India?
    (a) 1970   (b) 1973   (c) 1980   (d) 1992

12. What does MISHTI stand for in the context of mangrove conservation?
    (a) Mangrove Initiative for Sustainable Habitats and Integrated Incomes
    (b) Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Tangible Incomes
    (c) Mangrove Initiative for Sustainable Habitats and Tangible Investments
    (d) Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats and Integrated Technologies

13. When were the amendments to Plastic Waste Management Rules introduced?
    (a) 2022   (b) 2023   (c) 2024   (d) 2025

14. What is India's global rank in Net Forest Area Gain over the past 15 years?
    (a) 1st   (b) 2nd   (c) 3rd   (d) 4th

15. In which year was Project Elephant launched in India?
    (a) 1982   (b) 1987   (c) 1992   (d) 1997

16. What does GACERE stand for?
    (a) Global Alliance for Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency
    (b) Global Association for Climate and Environmental Resource Efficiency
    (c) Global Action for Circular Economy and Renewable Energy
    (d) Global Alliance for Climate and Environmental Resource Enhancement

17. When was the 6th Assembly of International Solar Alliance (ISA) hosted in New Delhi?
    (a) 31st October 2022   (b) 31st October 2023
    (c) 31st December 2023   (d) 1st January 2024

18. Which of the following is NOT mentioned as a global initiative of India?
    (a) Member of GACERE
    (b) Member of Steering Committee of International Resource Panel
    (c) Host of ISA Assembly
    (d) Host of World Environment Day 2024

19. What is the aim of the National Mission for Green India 2014?
    (a) To increase Forest/Tree Cover on 3 million hectares of Land
    (b) To increase Forest/Tree Cover on 5 million hectares of Land
    (c) To improve Quality of Forest/Tree Cover on 3 million hectares
    (d) To improve Quality of Forest/Tree Cover on 7 million hectares

20. In which year did India host the World Environment Day?
    (a) 2016   (b) 2017   (c) 2018   (d) 2019

2 BirdSanctuaries of Bihar added to Ramsar list

Why in News?

Nagi and Nakti Bird Sanctuaries, both located in Bihar's Jamui District, are now recognised under Ramsar Convention taking Total Ramsar Sites in India to 82.

Explained:

A bird sanctuary is a protected area designated for the conservation of bird species and their habitats. These sanctuaries provide safe havens where birds can live, breed, and thrive without the threat of human interference, hunting, or habitat destruction. They are essential for the preservation of biodiversity and serve as critical sites for scientific research, birdwatching, and environmental education.

The establishment of bird sanctuaries contributes significantly to the conservation of avian species, particularly those that are endangered or migratory. By protecting vital habitats, these sanctuaries help maintain ecological balance and support the health of broader ecosystems. Additionally, bird sanctuaries promote eco-tourism, fostering a greater appreciation for nature and encouraging sustainable practices among visitors. Through these efforts, bird sanctuaries play a crucial role in safeguarding the planet's avian diversity for future generations.

Way to marks:

Both sanctuaries are Man-made Reservoirs (Nagi dam and Nakti dam) and feature dry deciduous forests surrounded by hills.

They are also recognised as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) by BirdLife International.

Ramsar Convention

- Convention on Wetlands of International Importance
  - Signed in 1971 in the Iranian city of Ramsar.
  - Came into force in 1975.
- "Only International Treaty" that addresses Specific Ecosystem.
- Members: 172 States
  - India became a signatory to it on Feb 1, 1982.
- Ramsar Convention is Not a Regulatory Regime.
  - Modified by Paris Protocol in 1982 and by Regina Amendments in 1987.
- A Conference of the Parties (COP) to Convention meets Every 3 Years.
  - In 2022, COP14 was co – held in Wuhan (China) and Geneva (Switzerland).

Montreux Record

- *Launched in 1990.*
- *Register of Wetland Sites where Changes in Ecological Character have Occurred or are Occurring or are likely to occur as a Result of Technological Developments, Pollution or Other Human Interference.*
- *Indian Wetlands in Montreux Record: Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan) and Loktak Lake (Manipur).*
  - *Chilka lake (Odisha) was placed in it but was later removed from it.*

Wetlands in India

- India has around 4.63% of its Land as Wetlands covering an area of 15.26 million hectares.
- Total Wetland Sites: 82
  - Tamil Nadu continues to have Maximum Number of Ramsar Sites (16 Sites) followed by Uttar Pradesh (10 Sites).
- India stands 1st in South Asia and Joint 3rd with China in Asia in terms of Number of Designated Sites.

Government Initiatives to Preserve Wetlands

- Amrit Dharohar Capacity Building Scheme
  - Collaborative effort between "Ministry of Tourism" (Gajendra Singh Shekhawat) and "Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change" (Bhupender Yadav).
  - Aim: To encourage Optimal Use of Wetlands & enhance Biodiversity, Carbon Stock, Eco-Tourism Opportunities and Income Generation for Local Communities.
  - Primary Focus: To strategically transition from High – Volume Tourism to High – value Nature Tourism at Ecologically – Sensitive Wetlands.
  - Implemented over Next 3 years (2023 onwards).
  - Out of 16 identified Ramsar Sites, 5 have been selected for Pilot Projects under the scheme.
    - Sultanpur National Park (Haryana), Bhitarkanika Mangroves (Odisha), Chilika Lake (Odisha), Sirpur and Yashwant Sagar (Madhya Pradesh).
- National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA), 2015
  - Type: Centrally Sponsored Scheme
  - Single Conservation Programme for both Wetlands and Lakes.
  - By merging of "National Lake Conservation Plan" and "National Wetlands Conservation Programme".
  - Implemented by: Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.
- Wetlands of India Portal
  - Dynamic Knowledge Repository for Wetlands.
  - Single Point Access System that synthesizes Information Dissemination regarding Wetland Sites of India, Projects, Initiatives and Training.
- National Wetland Conservation Program, 1986
  - To conserve Wetlands in India & is implemented through State Wetland Authorities.

> **Related Facts**
> - *Currently, Highest Number of such sites is in UK (175) followed by Mexico (144).*
> - *Bolivia has Largest Area with 148000 sq km under Convention Protection.*

> **National Wetland Decadal Change Atlas**
> - *Prepared by Space Applications Center (SAC, ISRO).*
> - *Original Atlas was released by SAC in 2011.*

Pepper it With • Eutrophication , Red and Green algae

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following is NOT a characteristic of Nagi and Nakti dams?
   (a) Man-made reservoirs
   (b) Surrounded by hills
   (c) Coastal wetlands
   (d) Dry deciduous forests

2. In which year was the Ramsar Convention signed?
   (a) 1965
   (b) 1971
   (c) 1975
   (d) 1982

3. How many states are members of the Ramsar Convention?
   (a) 152
   (b) 162
   (c) 172
   (d) 182

4. When did India become a signatory to the Ramsar Convention?
   (a) February 1, 1972
   (b) February 1, 1982
   (c) February 1, 1992
   (d) February 1, 2002

5. How often does the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the Ramsar Convention meet?
   (a) Every year
   (b) Every 2 years
   (c) Every 3 years
   (d) Every 5 years

6. What percentage of India's land is covered by wetlands?
   (a) 2.63%
   (b) 3.63%
   (c) 4.63%
   (d) 5.63%

7. How many Ramsar sites does India have in total?
   (a) 62
   (b) 72
   (c) 82
   (d) 92

8. Which Indian state has the maximum number of Ramsar sites?
   (a) Uttar Pradesh
   (b) Tamil Nadu
   (c) Gujarat
   (d) Kerala

9. What is India's rank in Asia in terms of number of designated Ramsar sites?
   (a) 1st
   (b) 2nd
   (c) Joint 3rd
   (d) 4th

10. Which ministry is NOT involved in the Amrit Dharohar Capacity Building Scheme?
    (a) Ministry of Tourism
    (b) Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change
    (c) Ministry of Agriculture
    (d) Both a and b are involved

11. How many Ramsar sites have been selected for pilot projects under the Amrit Dharohar scheme?
    (a) 3
    (b) 5
    (c) 7
    (d) 10

12. In which year was the National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA) introduced?
    (a) 2010
    (b) 2013
    (c) 2015
    (d) 2018

13. Which of the following is NOT a component merged to form NPCA?
    (a) National Lake Conservation Plan
    (b) National Wetlands Conservation Programme
    (c) National River Conservation Plan
    (d) Both a and b are components

14. What type of scheme is the National Plan for Conservation of Aquatic Ecosystems (NPCA)?
    (a) State-sponsored scheme
    (b) Centrally sponsored scheme
    (c) Private-public partnership
    (d) NGO-led initiative

15. What is the primary purpose of the Wetlands of India Portal?
    (a) To provide weather forecasts
    (b) To serve as a knowledge repository for wetlands
    (c) To list endangered species
    (d) To promote tourism

16. In which year was the National Wetland Conservation Program initiated?
    (a) 1976
    (b) 1986
    (c) 1996
    (d) 2006

17. Which organization recognizes Nagi and Nakti dams as Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas?
    (a) WWF
    (b) IUCN
    (c) BirdLife International
    (d) Greenpeace

18. Where was the COP14 of the Ramsar Convention held in 2022?
    (a) Paris and Geneva
    (b) Wuhan and Geneva
    (c) New Delhi and Wuhan
    (d) Geneva and New York

19. What is the main focus of the Amrit Dharohar scheme?
    (a) Increasing wetland area
    (b) Promoting high-volume tourism
    (c) Transitioning to high-value nature tourism
    (d) Building dams

20. Which of the following is NOT a goal of the Amrit Dharohar scheme?
    (a) Enhance biodiversity
    (b) Increase carbon stock
    (c) Generate income for local communities
    (d) Promote industrial development

HOW GREENHOUSE GASES WARM OUR PLANET

The global warming potential (GWP) of human-generated greenhouse gases is a measure of how much heat each gas traps in the atmosphere, relative to carbon dioxide.

How much each human-caused greenhouse gas contributes to total emissions around the globe.
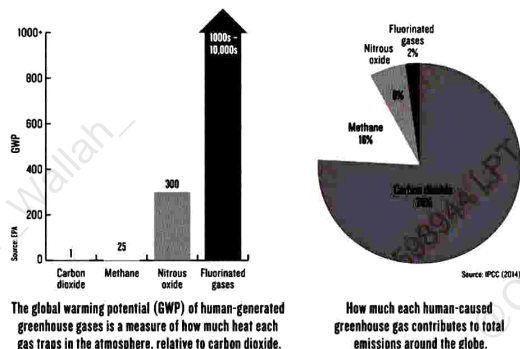
Global Nitrous Oxide Budget 2024

Why in News?

Planet-warming Nitrous Oxide (N2O) emissions grew by 40% between 1980 and 2020, according to a new report published by the Global Carbon Project.

Explained:

Nitrous oxide (N_2O) is a potent greenhouse gas and air pollutant, primarily produced by agricultural activities, industrial processes, and fossil fuel combustion. Though less abundant than carbon dioxide, N_2O has a much higher global warming potential, trapping heat in the atmosphere and contributing significantly to climate change. It also depletes the ozone layer, exacerbating global environmental issues.

The effects of nitrous oxide on global warming are profound, as it remains in the atmosphere for over a century, enhancing the greenhouse effect. Mitigation strategies include adopting sustainable agricultural practices, such as optimizing fertilizer use and promoting crop rotation, to reduce emissions. Additionally, improving waste management and advancing industrial processes can minimize N_2O release. By implementing these measures, we can effectively address the impact of nitrous oxide on global warming and promote a healthier, more sustainable environment.

Way to marks:

Highlights of Report

- Nitrous Oxide (N2O) is 3rd Most Significant Greenhouse Gas after Carbon Dioxide and Methane
  - o 273 Times More Potent than CO2 over 100 years.
  - o Increase in Greenhouse Gases has already raised Earth's Average Surface Temperature by 1.15 degrees Celsius compared to 1850 – 1900 Average.
  - o Anthropogenic Nitrous Oxide Emissions contribute to about 0.1 degrees of this warming.

- Nitrous Oxide (N2O) Emissions grew by 40% (3 million metric tons of N2O per year) between 1980 – 2020.

- Top 10 Emitters: China (16.7%), India (10.9%), USA (5.7 %), Brazil (5.3%), Russia (4.6%), Pakistan, Australia, Indonesia, Turkey, Canada
  - o Per Capita Emissions (Kg Nitrous Oxide/Person) in India have Lowest (0.8) in comparison to Countries like China (1.3), US (1.7), Brazil (2.5) and Russia (3.3)

> **Nitrous Oxide (N2O)**
> - *Commonly known as Laughing Gas (State of Euphoria) or Happy Gas*
> - *Colorless, Odorless and Non – Flammable Gas*

- Natural Sources: Oceans, Inland Water Bodies and Soil
  - Contributed 11.8% of Global Emissions of N2O.

- Biggest Human Sources of N₂O: Agriculture, Industry, Burning of Forests or Agricultural Waste.
  - 74% of Nitrous Oxide Emissions originated from Agricultural Practices (Use of Nitrogen Fertilizers and Animal Manure).

- Emission Pattern in Regions: Among 18 Regions; Only Europe, Russia, Australasia, Japan and Korea had Decreasing Nitrous Oxide Emissions.
  - Europe had Largest Rate of Decrease between 1980 and 2020, resulting from Reduced Fossil Fuel and Industry Emissions.
  - China and South Asia had Largest Increases in N2O Emissions from 1980 to 2020 at 92%.

- In 2022, Concentration of Nitrous Oxide in Atmosphere reached 336 parts per billion, 25% Higher than in 1850 – 1900.

> ***Global Carbon Project***
>
> *Formed in 2001 to help International Science Community to establish a Common, Mutually Agreed Knowledge Base that supports Policy Debate and action to Slow Rate of Increase of Greenhouse Gases in Atmosphere.*

Implications of Rising Nitrous Oxide Emissions

- *Intensified Global Warming: N₂O is around 300 times more effective than carbon dioxide (CO_2) at trapping heat over 100 years.*

- *Threat to Ozone Layer: N₂O breaks down in the stratosphere, releasing nitrogen oxides that damage the ozone layer.*

- *Challenge to Food Security: growing demand for food will likely lead to a further increase in N₂O emissions, creating a conflict between food security and climate goals.*

- *Challenge to Paris Climate Agreement: The increasing level of N₂O emissions will pose a challenge in achieving the goals of the Paris Climate Agreement*

Pepper it With

- Other green house gases and their effects , International conventions against green house gas emissions.

GLOBAL N₂O BUDGET
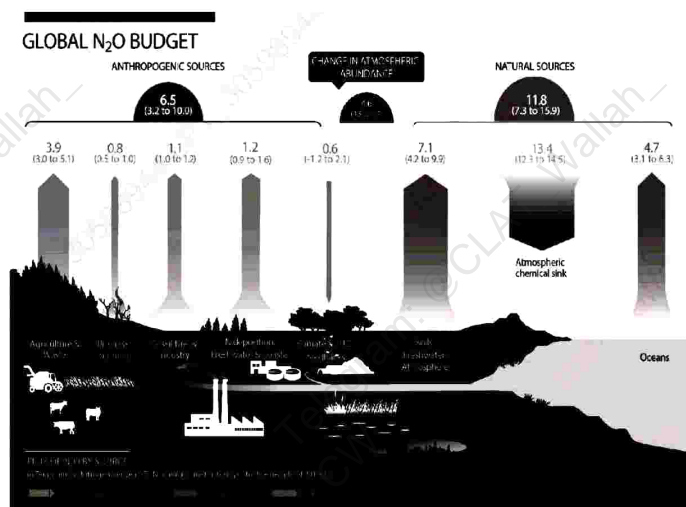
PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. What is the rank of Nitrous Oxide (N2O) among significant greenhouse gases?
    (a) 1st   (b) 2nd   (c) 3rd   (d) 4th

2. How many times more potent is N2O compared to CO2 over 100 years?
    (a) 173   (b) 223   (c) 273   (d) 323

3. By how much has the Earth's average surface temperature increased compared to the 1850-1900 average?
    (a) 0.95°C   (b) 1.05°C   (c) 1.15°C   (d) 1.25°C

4. What percentage of global warming is attributed to anthropogenic N2O emissions?
    (a) 0.05°C   (b) 0.1°C   (c) 0.15°C   (d) 0.2°C

5. By what percentage did N2O emissions grow between 1980-2020?
    (a) 20%   (b) 30%   (c) 40%   (d) 50%

6. Which country is the top emitter of N2O?
    (a) USA   (b) India   (c) China   (d) Brazil

7. What percentage of global N2O emissions does India contribute?
    (a) 5.7%   (b) 8.9%   (c) 10.9%   (d) 16.7%

8. Which country has the highest per capita N2O emissions among those listed?
    (a) India   (b) China   (c) USA   (d) Russia

9. What percentage of global N2O emissions come from natural sources?
    (a) 8.8%   (b) 10.8%   (c) 11.8%   (d) 12.8%

10. What percentage of N2O emissions originate from agricultural practices?
    (a) 54%   (b) 64%   (c) 74%   (d) 84%

11. Which region showed the largest rate of decrease in N2O emissions between 1980 and 2020?
    (a) Russia   (b) Europe   (c) Japan   (d) Australasia

12. What was the increase in N2O emissions from China and South Asia between 1980 and 2020?
    (a) 72%   (b) 82%   (c) 92%   (d) 102%

13. What was the concentration of N2O in the atmosphere in 2022?
    (a) 316 parts per billion   (b) 326 parts per billion
    (c) 336 parts per billion   (d) 346 parts per billion

14. How much higher is the 2022 N2O concentration compared to 1850-1900 levels?
    (a) 15%   (b) 20%   (c) 25%   (d) 30%

15. What is the primary anthropogenic source of N2O emissions?
    (a) Industry   (b) Agriculture   (c) Transportation   (d) Residential use

16. Which of the following is NOT listed as a top 10 emitter of N2O?
    (a) Pakistan   (b) Australia   (c) Japan   (d) Turkey

17. What is the range of N2O flux from oceans according to the image?
    (a) 1.1 to 2.1   (b) 2.1 to 3.1   (c) 3.1 to 4.1   (d) 3.1 to 6.3

18. Which anthropogenic source contributes the least to N2O emissions according to the image?
    (a) Agriculture & Waste   (b) Biomass burning
    (c) Fossil Fuel & Industry   (d) Climate & LUC feedbacks

19. What is the range of N2O flux from soils, freshwater, and atmosphere according to the image?
    (a) 2.2 to 7.9   (b) 3.2 to 8.9   (c) 4.2 to 9.9   (d) 5.2 to 10.9

20. What is the total anthropogenic N2O flux according to the image?
    (a) 5.5 to 9.0   (b) 6.5 to 10.0   (c) 7.5 to 11.0   (d) 8.5 to 12.0

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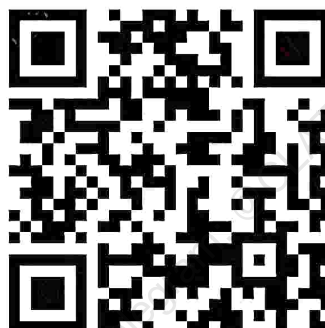
Environmental Performance Index 2024

Why in News?

Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy & Columbia Center for International Earth Science Information Network released Environmental Performance Index (EPI) for 2024.

Explained:

The Environmental Performance Index (EPI) is a metric developed by Yale and Columbia Universities, in collaboration with the World Economic Forum, to evaluate and rank countries' environmental health and sustainability. The EPI uses various indicators across categories like air quality, water resources, biodiversity, and climate change to provide a comprehensive assessment of national environmental performance. This index helps policymakers identify areas needing improvement and implement strategies for sustainable development.

The significance of the EPI lies in its ability to highlight environmental strengths and weaknesses on a global scale, promoting accountability and transparency. By offering a comparative analysis, the EPI encourages nations to adopt best practices and invest in environmental protection. It serves as a crucial tool for tracking progress towards international environmental goals and fostering a competitive spirit among countries to achieve higher standards of sustainability and ecological health.

Way to marks:

Key Highlights of EPI 2024

- Estonia leads EPI 2024 by reducing its Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 59% from 1990 levels.

- Only 5 Countries — Estonia, Finland, Greece, Timor-Leste and United Kingdom — cut their GHG Emissions at the rate needed to reach Net Zero by 2050.

- In contrast, Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia rank Lowest among 8 Regions assessed.

- Apart from United Kingdom, All Countries identified in 2022 Environmental Performance Index (EPI) Report as being on track to Achieve Net Zero Emissions by 2050, and have either seen slow progress, as in United States, or their emissions are still increasing, as seen in China, India and Russia.

India's Performance

- India ranks 176th out of 180 Countries with 27.6 Points, placing above only Pakistan, Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar.

  o Performs Poorly in Air Quality, Emissions, Biodiversity Conservation.

  o Largely due to its Heavy Reliance on Coal.

176	India	27.6
177	Myanmar	26.9
178	Laos	26.1
179	Pakistan	25.5
180	Viet Nam	24.5

- India ranks 177th in Air Quality and 172nd in Projected Emissions by 2025.

- Largest Emitter Of Transboundary Pollution: In South Asia, India is identified as Largest Emitter of Transboundary Pollution, impacting neighbouring Bangladesh.

- India fares relatively better (133rd) in Climate Change Category, due to Investments in Renewable Energy.

Environmental Performance Index

- Type: Biennial Index

- Launched By: Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy, Columbia Center for International Earth Science Information Network
  - o Initially by World Eco nomic Forum in 2002 under name Environmental Sustainability Index.

- Evaluation Target: UN Sustainability Goals, Paris Climate Change Agreement (2015), Kunming – Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework.

- 58 Performance Indicators grouped into 11 Categories with 3 Policy Objectives: Environmental Health, Ecosystem Vitality, Climate Change

- EPI place Countries on a 0 – 100 Scale from Worst to Best Performance.

RANK	COUNTRY	SCORE
1	Estonia	75.3
2	Luxembourg	75.0
3	Germany	74.6
4	Finland	73.7
5	United Kingdom	72.7
6	Sweden	70.5
7	Norway	70.0
8	Austria	69.0
9	Switzerland	68.0
10	Denmark	67.9

Pepper it With

- Other indexes for environmental conservation , Panchamrit targets

Scan the code to download the answer key of this month's magazine.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Which country leads the EPI 2024?
   (a) Finland   (b) Estonia   (c) United Kingdom   (d) Greece

2. By what percentage has Estonia reduced its greenhouse gas emissions from 1990 levels?
   (a) 39%   (b) 49%   (c) 59%   (d) 69%

3. How many countries are reported to have cut their GHG emissions at the rate needed to reach Net Zero by 2050?
   (a) 3   (b) 5   (c) 7   (d) 10

4. Which regions rank lowest among the 8 assessed in the EPI 2024?
   (a) Eastern Europe and North Africa   (b) Sub-Saharan Africa and Southern Asia
   (c) South America and Southeast Asia   (d) Central Asia and Oceania

5. What is India's rank in the EPI 2024?
   (a) 156th   (b) 166th   (c) 176th   (d) 186th

6. How many countries are ranked below India in the EPI 2024?
   (a) 2   (b) 4   (c) 6   (d) 8

7. What is India's rank in the Air Quality category?
   (a) 167th   (b) 172nd   (c) 177th   (d) 180th

8. In which category does India fare relatively better with a rank of 133rd?
   (a) Biodiversity Conservation   (b) Climate Change
   (c) Emissions   (d) Water Resources

9. What is cited as a major reason for India's poor performance in the EPI?
   (a) Deforestation   (b) Water pollution   (c) Reliance on coal   (d) Overfishing

10. How often is the Environmental Performance Index published?
    (a) Annually   (b) Biennially   (c) Triennially   (d) Quadrennially

11. Which organization initially launched the Environmental Performance Index in 2002?
    (a) United Nations   (b) World Economic Forum
    (c) Yale University   (d) World Bank

12. How many performance indicators are used in the EPI?
    (a) 38   (b) 48   (c) 58   (d) 68

13. How many policy objectives are used to group the EPI categories?
    (a) 2   (b) 3   (c) 4   (d) 5

14. What scale does the EPI use to rank countries?
    (a) 0-50   (b) 0-100   (c) 1-10   (d) 1-1000

15. Which of the following is NOT one of the policy objectives of the EPI?
    (a) Environmental Health   (b) Ecosystem Vitality
    (c) Climate Change   (d) Economic Sustainability

16. Which country is identified as the largest emitter of transboundary pollution in South Asia?
    (a) Pakistan   (b) Bangladesh (c) India   (d) Nepal

17. What is India's rank in Projected Emissions by 2025?
    (a) 162nd   (b) 167th   (c) 172nd   (d) 177th

18. Which of these agreements is NOT mentioned as an evaluation target for the EPI?
    (a) UN Sustainability Goals
    (b) Paris Climate Change Agreement
    (c) Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework
    (d) Kyoto Protocol

19. How many countries are included in the EPI 2024 ranking?
    (a) 160   (b) 170   (c) 180   (d) 190

20. Which center, along with the Yale Center for Environmental Law and Policy, is responsible for the EPI?
    (a) Columbia Center for International Earth Science Information Network
    (b) Harvard Center for Environmental Studies
    (c) Stanford Center for Conservation Biology
    (d) MIT Center for Environmental Policy Research

NEWS IN SHORT

Magellan Mission

After analyzing the archived data from NASA's Magellan Mission, scientists say they observed New Lava Flows on Venus, suggesting that the Planet was Volcanically Active between 1990 and 1992.

Type: Deep Space Mission

Launched by NASA on May 4, 1989.

Launched from Cape Canaveral aboard Space Shuttle Atlantis.

Aim: To explore Planet Venus.

1st Inter – Planetary Mission launched from Space Shuttle and 1st Spacecraft to use Inertial Upper Stage Booster.

Named after the Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan, who was 1st to Circum-Navigate the Earth.

Goal: To map Surface of Venus using Radar Imaging, as Thick Atmosphere of Planet made Visual Observation Difficult.

India's 1st Quantum Diamond Microchip Imager

India's 1st Quantum Diamond Microchip Imager to be developed.

It will be developed by Tata Consultancy Services in partnership with IIT – Bombay.

This Project aligns with India's National Quantum Mission (NQM).

Quantum Diamond Microchip Imager

- Advanced Sensing Tool for Semiconductor Chip Imaging.

- Uses Defects in a Diamond's Structure (Nitrogen-Vacancy Centers) for detecting Anomalies in Semiconductor Chips.

- Objectives: Reduces Chip Failures and Improve Energy Efficiency of Electronic Devices.

  o Promote Development of Semiconductor Industry in India.

> *National Quantum Mission*
> - *Launched in 2023*
> - *Implemented by: Department of Science & Technology*

Colombo Process

India has become Chair of Colombo Process for 1ˢᵗ time since its inception in 2003.

- Type: Regional Consultative Process

- Serves as a Forum for Exchange of Best Practices on Overseas Employment.
  - Provides Consultations on Management of Overseas Employment and Contractual Labour for Countries of Origin in Asia.

- Members : 12 States
  - Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam.

- Non – Binding, and Decision – Making is by Consensus.

- Process is coordinated through Permanent Missions of Member States at United Nations in Geneva.

- Secretariat: International Organization for Migration

Living Will

High Court Judge becomes 1ˢᵗ in Goa to register a "Living Will".

Living Will (Advance Medical Directive)

- Refers to a Written Document that a Person uses to give his Explicit Instructions in Advance about Medical Treatment to be administered if he becomes Incompetent or Unable to Communicate.

- Executed Voluntarily

- Supreme Court in Common Cause vs Union of India (2018) Case, held that a Person in Persistent Vegetative State can opt for Passive Euthanasia (Withdrawing Life Support, Medical Treatment).

- A Person can execute a Living Will to refuse Medical Treatment in case of a Terminal illness.

Dag HaHmmarskjold Medal

Dag Hammarskjöld Medal was presented posthumously by UN to an Indian Peacekeeper Naik Dhananjay Kumar Singh.

Dag Hammarskjold Medal is Posthumous Award to members of peacekeeping operations.

1ˢᵗ Medal was presented to Family of Dag Hammarskjöld in 1998.

Dag Hammarskjold was Secretary – General of UN from 1953 until 1961.

Daksha Project

IIT Bombay leading Daksha Project. It is leading in close collaboration with Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR), Raman Research Institute (RRI), etc.

> *GRB*
> *Short – lived Bursts of Gamma – Ray Light, Most Energetic Form of Light.*

Daksha Project

- Ambitious Proposal to build 2 High – Energy Space Telescopes for Study of Explosive Astrophysical Sources.

- Each Telescope will be equipped with 3 Types of Sensors to cover Low Energy to High-Range Energy Bands.

- Objectives: Detect, Localize and Characterize High – Energy Counterparts to Gravitational Wave Sources.

- High Sensitivity Detection and Studies of Gamma Ray Bursts (GRB).

Other Gamma Ray Detection Mission

- Astrosat: India's Multi – Wavelength Space Observatory aimed at studying Celestial Sources in X – Ray, Optical and UV Spectral Bands simultaneously.

- Fermi Gamma-ray Space Telescope: NASA's Telescope observes Gamma Rays across a Wide Energy Range.

LignoSat

In a world-first, Japanese Researchers have built a Tiny Wooden Satellite named LignoSat that will be launched into Space in September.

LignoSat

- "LignoSat", a fusion of "Ligno" (Latin word for Wood) and "Satellite".

- Development By: Kyoto University and Sumitomo Forestry Co.

- Objective: To leverage Eco – Friendliness and Cost – Effectiveness of Wood in Space Exploration.

- Constructed from Magnolia Wood.

- 1st be sent to International Space Station aboard a SpaceX Rocket from Kennedy Space Center.

RudraM – II Missile

Defence Research & Development Organisation successfully flight-tested RudraM-II from Su-30 MK-I Platform of Indian Air Force (IAF) off Coast of Odisha.

RudraM – II Missile

- Indigenously – developed Solid – Propelled Air – to – Surface Missile System.

- Developed By: DRDO

- Designed to have a strike range of almost 350-km, from a Sukhoi – 30 MK – I Fighter of IAF.

Lost Nile Branch Key to Pyramid Construction

A Study discovered an Ancient Nile River Branch that helped Transport Workers and Materials to Egypt's Pyramids, now buried under Modern Landscapes.

Researchers employed technologies including satellite imagery, high- resolution digital elevation data, and historical maps to trace the path of the now – vanished Ahramat Branch of Nile River.

Revelation of Ahramat Branch is a previously unknown Nile Channel from Lisht (Village) to Giza (City).
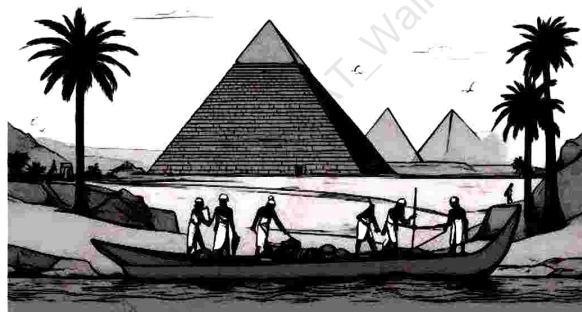
Egyptian Pyramids

- Ancient Stone Structures built as Tombs for Pharaohs (Ancient Egyptian Rulers).

- There are Over 118 Identified Pyramids in Egypt, but Most Famous are 3 Pyramids at Giza:

  o Great Pyramid of Giza: Oldest of Seven Wonders of Ancient World and Largest Pyramid ever built. It was constructed for Pharaoh Khufu (Cheops).

  o Pyramid of Khafre (Chephren): Appears Larger than Great Pyramid due to its Steeper Angle and Presence of Sphinx (Human Head and a Lion's Body).

  o Pyramid of Menkaure (Mycerinus): Smallest of 3 Main Pyramids at Giza, built for Pharaoh Menkaure.

Chang'e – 6

China's Space Agency said that China landed an Uncrewed Spacecraft on Far Side of the Moon. So far, No Other Country has landed on that Half of the Moon.

India's Chandrayaan – 3 Mission landed on South Pole of Near Side of the Moon.

Chang'e – 6

- Successfully landed in South Pole-Aitken Basin.

- 1st Human Sampling and Return Mission from Far Side of Moon for 1st time.

- Launch Vehicle: Long March – 5 Rocket

- Launch Site: Wenchang Space Launch Center (Hainan, China)

- Consists of an Orbiter, a Returner, a Lander and an Ascender.
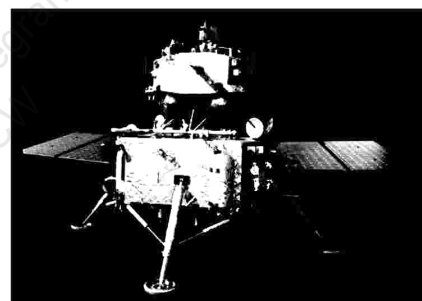
Far Side of Moon

- *Refers to Hemisphere of Moon that always faces Away from Earth (Also referred to as Dark Side of Moon).*

  o *This happens because Moon is Tidally Locked with Earth due to Gravitational Pull.*

- *Soviet Union's Luna 3 Spacecraft took 1st photo of this Side of Moon.*

- *It has a Thicker Crust, More Craters and Fewer Lava Plains than Near Side.*

- It marks 2nd Time a mission has successfully reached Far Side of the Moon.
  - China 1st completed that historic feat in 2019 with its Chang'e – 4 Probe.

Vivekananda Rock Memorial

Prime Minister of India announced his visit and meditation at Vivekananda Rock Memorial in Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu.

Vivekananda Rock Memorial

- Sacred Monument located off Coast of Kanyakumari, India's Southernmost Tip.

- Commemorates Visit of Great Spiritual leader Swami Vivekananda in Dec 1892.

- According to Ancient Tradition, Rock on which Memorial stands was blessed by touch of feet of Goddess Kanyakumari.

- Swami Vivekananda himself attained enlightenment on this very rock.

> *Swami Vivekananda*
> - *Born as Narendra Nath Datta on 12 Jan 1863 to Bhuvaneswari Devi and Vishwanath Datta.*
> - *Chief Disciple of Ramakrishna Paramhansa.*
> - *In 1893, Swami Vivekananda represented India at World Parliament of Religions in Chicago.*

Hydroxyurea for Children: A New Approach to Treat Sickle Cell Disease

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) seeks partners for a new project.

They want to Develop and Commercialize a Low – Dose or Children's Version of Hydroxyurea. This medication will treat Sickle Cell Disease in India.

Hydroxyurea is Oral Chemotherapy Drug that is prescribed to People with Sickle Cell Disease.

Sickle Cell Anaemia

- 1st discovered by a physician named James Herrick.

- Group of Inherited Disorders known as Sickle Cell Disease (SCD).

- Affects Shape of Red Blood Cells, which carry Oxygen to All Parts of the Body.

Special Category Status

With General Elections throwing up a fractured mandate, Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United) and Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam Party are set to play a key role in government formation at the Centre. As a result, their past

> *Eligibility for Special Category Status (Gadgil Formula)*
> - *Hilly and Difficult Terrain.*
> - *Low Population Density and /or a Sizable Share of Tribal Population.*
> - *Strategic Location along Borders with Neighbouring Countries.*
> - *Economically and Infrastructurally Backward.*
> - *Non – Viable Nature of State Finances.*

demands for Special Category Status (SCS) for Bihar and Andhra Pradesh, respectively, are back in focus.

Evolution of Idea of SCS

- Constitution does Not include Any Provision for Categorisation of Any State in India as SCS State.

- Introduced in 1969 on recommendations of 5th Finance Commission (Chaired by Mahavir Tyagi).

  o At that time, this was provided to Assam, Jammu and Kashmir and Nagaland.

- Idea of SCS was 1st formalised in April 1969 when Gadgil – Mukherjee Formula of Fund Allocation was cleared by National Development Council (NDC).

  o On the basis of this formula, More States were given SSCS when they attained Statehood.

  o These include Himachal Pradesh in 1970 – 71, Manipur, Meghalaya and Tripura in 1971 – 72; Sikkim in 1975 – 76; Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram in 1986 – 87, Uttarakhand in 2001 – 02.

> ### National Development Council
>
> - *Set up on 6 Aug 1952*
> - *Apex Body for Decision Making and Deliberations on Development Matters in India*
> - *Aim: To strengthen and mobilise Effort and Resources of Nation in support of 5 Year Plans.*
> - *Head: Prime Minister*

NOTA Creates New Record In Madhya Pradesh

None of the Above (NOTA) has created a New Record in Indore, Madhya Pradesh in Lok Sabha Election Results.

None of the Above (NOTA)

- Allows Voters to express their Dissatisfaction with Available Candidates during Elections.

- Enables Voter to Officially Register a Vote of Rejection for All Candidates who are contesting an Election.

- If a Voter chooses to press NOTA on EVM, it indicates that Voter has Not Chosen to Vote for Any Party.

- Voter must be eligible to register a Vote of Rejection if they feel that Contesting Candidates do Not Deserve to be Voted for.

- Right to Vote granted to All Citizens must allow Vote of Disapproval.

- In 2013, Supreme Court, in People's Union of Civil Liberties vs Union of India, ruled that NOTA Option should be provided in Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs).

- It allows Voters to exercise their right Not to Vote while maintaining Secrecy.

Arun – 3 Hydro Electric Project

Prime Minister of Nepal completed the last blast of Head Race Tunel of Arun – 3 Hydro Electric Project in Nepal.

Arun – 3 Hydro Electric Project

- Type: Run – of – the – River Hydropower Project

- Capacity: 900 MW

- On Arun River in Sankhuwasabha District of Eastern Nepal.

- Developed By: SJVN Arun – III Power Development Company (SAPDC)
  - Wholly – owned Subsidiary of India's Satluj Jal Vidyut Nigam

- Operational Period: 25 years, excluding Construction Period of 5 Years.

Review of Agnipath Scheme

National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition said New Government should review "Agnipath" Scheme for Short Term Recruitments to Armed Forces.

Agnipath Scheme

- Also called Tour of Duty Scheme.

- Introduced in 2022.

- Short-Term Recruitment Scheme for Indian Army.

- Under Policy, Soldiers — called 'Agniveers' — are recruited for 4 years, at the end of which Only 25 Percent of Recruits from a Batch are Retained for Regular Service for 15 years.

- Age Limit: 17.5 – 21 years

Concerns
- *Short Duration*
- *Lack of Employment Guarantee*
- *Training Duration*

Significance of Scheme
- *Reducing the Average Age in Military*
- *Short Term Services in Other Countries*
- *Technologically Advanced Future*
- *Budgetary Constraints*
- *Employment*

Boeing Starliner Successfully Docks NASA Crew at International Space Station

Starliner has innovative, weldless, reusable structure lasting up to 10 missions with six-month turnarounds, featuring wireless internet interfaces.

International Space Station (ISS)

- Artificial Satellite Research Facility

- Jointly Developed By: USA, European Countries, Japan, Canada and Russia

- Largest Manmade and Habitable Artificial Satellite.

- Altitude: 400 km above the Earth.

India's Own Space Station
- *Conceptualisation Phase: ISRO is developing India's 1st Space Station, Bharatiya Antariksh Station.*
- *Station is planned to be Assembled in a Phased Manner like ISS by 2035.*

Benefits of ISS
- *Research on Earth*
- *New Frontier in Physics*
- *Advancing Human Health*
- *Low Earth Orbit Economy*
- *Long-Duration Space Travel*

CCI's New Regulations Ushers a New Era of Transparency and Accountability

In a significant move aimed at enhancing Regulatory Oversight and Compliance, Competition Commission of India (CCI) has proposed New Regulations to monitor Settlements and Commitments of Industry Giants.

Competition (Amendment) Act 2023

- Government of India constituted Competition Law Review Committee (CLRC) in 2018.
  - To examine and suggest Modifications in Competition Act, 2002.
  - After reviewing recommendations of CLRC, 2002 Act was amended in 2023.

> ### Settlement
> - *Apply to Alleged Contraventions related to certain Anti – Competitive Agreements and Abuse of Dominance.*
> - *An Application for Settlement may be filed Only After Receipt of Investigation Report but prior to such time as may be prescribed by Regulations, before Passing of Final Order by CCI.*

- Amendment Act introduces a "Settlement & Commitment Framework" to reduce Litigation.
  - Amended Act makes a Number of Changes to Competition Act 2002, with aim to Strengthen Competition Regulation, Streamline Operations and foster Business – friendly Environment.

> ### Commitment
> - *Framework enables Parties to offer Commitments for certain Types of Anti – Competitive Agreements and Abuse of Dominance (as available for Settlements).*
> - *Empowers CCI to accept Commitments on such Terms and Manner of Implementation and Monitoring, as may be specified by Regulations.*

National Health Claim Exchange

Health Ministry & Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) are collaborating to launch National Health Claim Exchange (NHCX).

National Health Claim Exchange

- Communication Protocol that facilitates Exchange of Health Claim Information between Payers, Providers, Beneficiaries and Other Entities.
- Designed to be Inter – Operable, Machine – Readable, Auditable and Verifiable, ensuring Accurate and Trustworthy Information Exchange.

Aligns with IRDAI's Foal of "Insurance for All by 2047".

Settlement of Cashless Claims

- *New Timeline Mandates that All Cashless Insurance Claims must be processed within 3 Hours of receiving Discharge Authorization from Hospital.*

- *Insurance Regulator has given Providers a Deadline of July 31 to implement Necessary Systems and Processes.*

IRDAI

- *IRDAI stands for Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India*
- *Established in 1999*
  - *Based on recommendations from Malhotra Committee Report.*
- *Type: Statutory Body*
- *Regulates, Promotes, Protects Interests of Policyholders in India's Insurance Industry.*

Images of Sun captured by Aditya – L1

Indian Space Research Organisation has released images of the Sun captured by Aditya L1 Satellite during a Major Geo-Magnetic Storm in May.

Two Remote Sensing Payloads, namely Solar UltraViolet Imaging Telescope (SUIT) and Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC), along with other payloads, captured Images from Lagrange Point in Space.

Other Solar Missions

- *Helios 2 Solar Probe (NASA, 1976)*
- *WIND (NASA, 1994)*
- *Hinode (JAEA, 2006)*
- *Interface Region Imaging Spectrograph (IRIS) (NASA, 2013)*
- *Parker Solar Probe (NASA, 2018)*
- *Solar Terrestrial Relations Observatory (STEREO) (NASA, 2006)*
- *Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (European Space Agency)*
- *Kuafu – 1 Solar Probe (China)*

Aditya – L1

- Launched in 2023.

- Launched By: Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle – XL (PSLV C57)

- India's 1st Space Mission to observe Sun from a Halo Orbit around Lagrange Point 1 (L1) of Sun – Earth System.

- ISRO's 2nd Astronomy Observatory – class Mission after AstroSat (2015).

- Aim: To provide Valuable Insights into Solar Corona, Photosphere, Chromosphere and Solar Wind.

  o   For Observing and Understanding Chromospheric and Coronal Dynamics of the Sun.

Notified Disasters in India

There have been calls for Heat Waves to be declared a Notified Disaster under Disaster Management Act, 2005.

Disaster Management Act, 2005

- Disaster Management Act (2005) enacted in the wake of Orissa Super-Cyclone (1999) and Tsunami (2004), defines a Disaster as a "Catastrophe, Mishap, Calamity or Grave Occurrence" arising from "Natural or Man – made Causes".

- Act defines Disaster as Any Significant Event, whether Natural or Man-Made, causing Substantial Loss of Life,

Human Suffering, Property Damage or Environmental Degradation beyond Community's Coping Capacity.

- This Act established National Disaster Management Authority, along with State Disaster Management Authorities.

- States receive Assistance during Natural Disasters through various provisions established under Act of 2005.

- Funds for Disaster Relief are available to States from 2 Sources: State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF) and National Disaster Relief Fund (NDRF).

  o These Funds were created with Enactment of Disaster Management Act, 2005 (DMA), following Tsunami of 2004.

- Currently, there are 12 Categories of Disasters which are notified under this Act.

  o Cyclones, Drought, Earthquake, Fire, Flood, Tsunami, Hailstorm, Landslide, Avalanche, Cloudburst, Pest Attack, Frost and Cold Waves.

Starship

SpaceX's Starship Rocket accomplished its 1st Fully Successful Test Flight, with both its Booster and Spacecraft making a gentle splashdown after an hour-long Sub-Orbital Space Flight.

Starship

- Designed to be Fully Reusable for Missions to various destinations in Space, including Mars.

- Part of a 2 – Stage Orbit Launch System

  o Composed of Super Heavy Booster and Starship Spacecraft

    ▪ Super Heavy Booster (1st Stage): Responsible for lifting Starship out of Earth's Atmosphere.
    ▪ Starship Spacecraft (2nd Stage): Designed for Space Travel, including carrying Crew and Cargo.

- Powered By: Raptor Engines (Methalox: Liquid Methane and Liquid Oxygen)

- Objectives and Missions

  o Mars Colonization: Central to SpaceX's long-term goal of making Humanity Multi-Planetary by establishing a Self-Sustaining Colony on Mars.

  o Lunar Missions: NASA's Artemis Program has selected a variant of Starship to serve as a Lunar Lander for Returning Humans to Moon.

Maitri Setu

Maitri Setu, also known as India – Bangladesh Friendship Bridge, is set to open by September, connecting India's landlocked North-East to Bay of Bengal.

Maitri Setu

- Connects Sabroom in Tripura with Ramgarh in Bangladesh.

  o Length: 1.9 kms

- Constructed over Feni River
  - Feni River acts as a Boundary between India (in Tripura) and Bangladesh.
- Construction By: National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd

Quantum Science and Technology
Refers to Study and Application of Principles of Quantum Mechanics, which governs Behaviour of Matter and Energy at Atomic and Subatomic Scales.

International Year of Quantum Science and Technology

United Nations proclaimed 2025 as International Year of Quantum Science and Technology.

Resolution for this was led by Mexico at UNESCO General Conference in May 2023.

Year 2025 marks a century since German physicist Werner Heisenberg published a paper laying Foundation of Modern Quantum Mechanics.

He was awarded Nobel Prize for Physics in 1932.

India's Initiatives in field of Quantum Technology

- *National Quantum Mission (2023): To Seed, Nurture and Scale up Scientific and Industrial R&D and create a Vibrant & Innovative Ecosystem in Quantum Technology.*
- *Quantum Enabled Science & Technology (QuEST): Research Program to build Quantum Capabilities.*
- *Quantum Computing Applications Lab (QCAL): To accelerate Quantum Computing – led Research and Development and enable New Scientific Discoveries.*

30th Anniversary of United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

UNCCD is one of 3 Global Agreements known as Rio Conventions (1992), alongside UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

UNCCD

- Established in 1994.
- Sole Legally Binding International Agreement linking Environment and Development to Sustainable Land Management.
- Objectives: To Protect and Restore Land and ensure a Safer, Just and More Sustainable Future.
- Members: 196 Countries and European Union
- Report: Global Land Outlook

Land Degradation
- *Deterioration or Loss of Productive Capacity of Soils for Present and Future.*
- *Affects up to 40% of World's Land Area, resulting in Loss of 100 million hectares of Healthy Land each year.*
- *In India, 32% of its Land is under Degradation and 25% undergoing Desertification.*

Craters on Mars Surface

Scientists of Physical Research Laboratory (Ahmedabad) discovered 3 Craters on Mars.

Key Highlights

- Discovered Tharsis Volcanic Region on Mars, where these 3 Craters are located, is characterised by Extensive Lava Flows.
  - o Lal Crater: Named after Prof Devendra Lal, a renowned Indian Geophysicist and Former Director of PRL from 1972 – 1983.
  - o Mursan Crater: Named after a town in Uttar Pradesh (India) that was Superimposed on Eastern Side of Rim of Lal Crater.
  - o Hilsa Crater: Named after a town in Bihar, superimposed on Western Side of Rim of Lal Crater.

> ### Mars
> - 4th Planet from the Sun and is a Cold Desert World.
> - Nearly Half the Size of Earth.
> - Called Red Planet, because of Rusty Iron in the Ground.
> - Lower Gravity (about 1/3rd that of Earth)

> ### Physical Research Laboratory
> - Founded in 1947 by Dr Vikram Sarabhai.
> - Unit of Department of Space.
> - Carries out Fundamental Research in Selected Areas of Physics, Space & Atmospheric Sciences, Astronomy, Astrophysics & Solar Physics, Planetary & Geo Sciences.

Environmental Flows (E-flows) Monitoring System

Union Jal Shakti Ministry launched an E-Flow Ecological Monitoring System that allows Real-Time Planning and Monitoring of Projects, River Water Quality and Other Key Parameters.

Background

- Government of India mandated in 2018 Minimum E-Flow for various stretches of Ganga River to be maintained Year-Round.

- Following this, National Mission for Clean Ganga, an Arm of Jal Shakti Ministry, laid down flow specifications essential for –
  - o Preserving River's Ecological Balance, Safeguarding Aquatic Life.
  - o Ensuring Sustainability amidst Diverse Water Usage Demands.

> ### National Ganga Council
> - Established in 2016
>   - o Under Environment (Protection) Act 1986.
> - Responsible for controlling Pollution and revitalising Ganga River Basin.
> - Headed By: Prime Minister

- With monitoring and regulatory mechanisms, Ganga's Ecological Resilience is being Safeguarded for Generations to come.

E – Flows Monitoring System

- Allows Real-Time Analysis of Water Quality of Ganga, Yamuna, and their tributaries.

- o   Monitoring Performance of Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs)
- o   Ensuring that they operate at their Rated Capacity.
- Developed By: National Mission for Clean Ganga

1st All – India Survey on AYUSH

Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (Rao Inderjit Singh) released 1st All – India Survey on AYUSH. Survey was conducted by National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) from July 2022 to June 2023.

Key Findings

- Around 95% of Rural Population and 96% of Urban Population aged 15 years and above are Aware of Ayush.
- Ayush is predominantly used for Rejuvenation (Preventive) purpose followed by Therapeutic (Curative) Treatment.
- During 2022 – 23, Use of Ayush and Average Expenditure Incurred per Person for Prevention or Treatment of Ailments is more in Urban Areas than Rural Areas.

AYUSH System

- Traditional System of Healthcare.
- AYUSH stands as Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa, Homoeopathy.
- India is 2nd Largest Exporter of Ayurveda and Alternative Medicine globally.

Artemis Accords

Armenia joins as 43rd Signatory Nation to NASA's Artemis Accords for Lunar Exploration.

Artemis Accords

- Established in 2020 by NASA
  - o   In coordination with US Department of State, together with 7 Other Founding Member Nations (Australia, Canada, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, UAE, UK).
- Presently, there are 43 Signatories including India.
- Grounded in Outer Space Treaty of 1967, Non – Binding Set of Principles designed to guide Civil Space Exploration and Use.
- Vision: Peaceful, Sustainable and Transparent Cooperation in Space.

UAV 'Nagastra'

Indian Army has got its 1st Indigenous Man-portable Suicide Drones

Designed to Target Enemy Training Camps, Launch Pads and Infiltrators with Precision, without endangering lives of soldiers.

Designed By Solar Industries' Economic Explosives Limited (EEL, Nagpur)
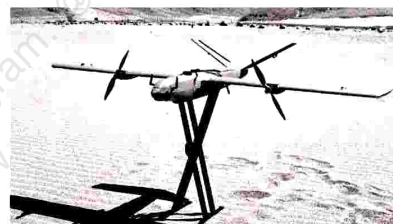
Kanchanjunga Express Accident

9 People were killed and at least 40 were injured when Sealdah-bound Kanchanjunga Express from Agartala was hit from the rear by a Goods Train.

Accident occurred in West Bengal's Darjeeling District, 11 km from New Jalpaiguri Station.

A Combination of a Signalling Gault on Tracks before New Jalpaiguri Station and Human Error by Driver of Freight Train are likely to have led to a deadly collision.

Kanchanjunga Express Accident

- Combination of Faulty Automatic Signalling System and Human Error

- Faulty Automatic Signalling System

  o Automatic Signalling System between Ranipatra Railway Station and Chattar Hat Junction in West Bengal was Not Working.

  o This prompted Rangapani Station Manager to issue a Cautionary Note known as T/A912 to All Drivers passing through the Section.

- Human Error

  o Driver of Kanchanjunga Express followed Correct Procedures during Defect in Automatic Signalling System.

  o It stopped at All Red Signals for 1 Minute and proceeding at 10 kmph.

  o However, Goods Train's Driver ignored these norms and hit Stationary Passenger Train from behind.

> *T/A912 Authorization*
>
> - *Also known as Paper Line Clearance.*
> - *Specific Instruction given to Train Drivers in event of a Failure or Defect in Automatic Signalling System.*
> - *Outlines Procedures and Speed Restrictions that must be followed to ensure Safe Train Operations under such conditions.*

Nalanda University Revival

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the new Nalanda University campus near Rajgir's Ancient University Ruins.

Nalanda University

- Most Ancient University on Indian Subcontinent.

- Founded by Kumar Gupta of Gupta Dynasty in Bihar in 427 CE in Modern Bihar in Early 5th Century.

- Flourished for 600 years until 12th Century.

  o During King Harshavardhana's Reign (606-647 AD) Chinese Scholar Xuan Zang (Hiuen Tsang) and Moksadeva (7th-century Chinese Buddhist Monk) came here and studied for about 5 years

  o In 670 AD, Chinese Pilgrim I-Tsing visited Nalanda.

  o Aryabhatta, a pioneer of Indian mathematics and inventor of zero, was one of the esteemed educators at Nalanda.

- University was destroyed in 1193 by Bakhtiyar Khilji, a General of Turkish Ruler Qutbuddin Aibak.
  - 1st Attack on Nalanda Mahavihara occurred between 455-470 AD during Reign of Emperor Samudragupta of Gupta Empire from the Hunas.
- University was Rediscovered in 1812 by Scottish Surveyor Francis Buchanan-Hamilton.
  - Later identified as Ancient University by Sir Alexander Cunningham in 1861.
  - Ruins of Nalanda Univesity was declared as a UN Heritage Site in 2016.

Revival -

- Idea to revive Nalanda University was proposed by former president Dr APJ Abdul Kalam in 2006.
- Parliament established University following decisions from 2nd East Asia Summit (EAS) in 2007 and 4th EAS in 2009.
- Indian Parliament passed Nalanda University Act in 2010.
- Former President Pranab Mukherjee laid Foundation Stone for Permanent Campus in 2016, with construction starting in 2017.
- Nalanda University has participation from 17 Countries.
- Net Zero' Green Campus is designed by BV Doshi.
- University's first Chancellor: Nobel Prize-winning economist Amartya Sen
- First Visitor: The then-President Pranab Mukherjee became the first Visitor.

> ***UNESCO's Heritage Sites Related to Buddhism***
>
> - *Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara at Nalanda, Bihar.*
> - *Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi, MP.*
> - *Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodh Gaya, Bihar.*
> - *Ajanta Caves Aurangabad, Maharashtra.*
> - *Buddhist Chanting of Ladakh was included in UNESCO's Representative List of Humanity's Intangible Cultural Heritage in 2012.*

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IMPORTANT PERSON IN NEWS

Arundhati Roy

- Indian author Arundati Roy was awarded the 2023 PEN Pinter Prize.

- The award was created in honour of the famous writer Harold Pinter. The prize is given to writers with "outstanding literary merit" who look at the world seriously and think about it.

- In 1997, her first book, "The God of Small Things," won the Booker Prize.

- The English PEN, a nonprofit group whose mission is to protect free speech and promote literary culture, started the PEN Pinter Prize in 2009.

- Famous people like Salman Rushdie, Margaret Atwood, and Carol Ann Duffy have been winners in the past.

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IMPORTANT Dates

World Day Against Child Labour- 12ᵗʰ June

- In 2002, International Labour Organisation (ILO) established June 12ᵗʰ as World Day Against Child Labour.

- Theme 2024 – Let's Act on Our Commitments: End Child Labour

- International Labour Organisation (ILO) defines a Child as Anyone below the age of 18 who should Not be involved in Hazardous Work.

International Labour Organisation

- *Established in 1919*
- *Specialized Agency of United Nations*
- *Dedicated to improving Labour Conditions and Living Standards throughout the world.*
- *1ˢᵗ UN Specialized Agency in 1946.*
- *Director General: Gilbert Houngbo*
- *HQ: Geneva (Switzerland)*
- *Awarded Nobel Prize for Peace in 1969.*

International Yoga Day- 21ˢᵗ June

- Every year on June 21st, people worldwide celebrate International Yoga Day to promote the numerous benefits of practicing yoga.

- This special day coincides with the summer solstice, which is the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere.

- The official theme for International Yoga Day 2024 is "Yoga for Women Empowerment".

- The purpose of this day is to raise awareness about the holistic advantages that yoga offers for our well-being.

- On December 11, 2014, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed June 21 as International Yoga Day. The resolution called on all UN member states to "observe International Yoga Day annually, to raise awareness of the many benefits of yoga."

- The first International Yoga Day was celebrated on June 21, 2015, with events taking place in over 190 countries.

International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking held in Kargil- 26ᵗʰ June

- The celebration of World Drug Day on June 26th underscores global efforts to combat drug abuse and trafficking.

- It was established by the UN in 1987, to raise awareness and enhance international cooperation in prevention, treatment, and law enforcement.

- This year's theme, "The evidence is clear: Invest in prevention," emphasizes evidence-based strategies.

- The World Drug Report 2023 highlights rising drug use and associated social inequalities, environmental damage, and challenges in treatment access, urging comprehensive global action.

National Statistics Day- 29ᵗʰ June

- The day is not to be confused with the United Nations' World Statistics Day, which is celebrated every five years on October 20.

- The day June 29 is the birth anniversary of Professor Mahalanobis, known as the father of Indian statistics.

- The day highlights the important role of statistical data in policy-making and development planning.

- It also aims to raise public awareness about the importance of statistics in socio-economic planning.

- Since 2007, Statistics Day is celebrated every year with a theme of contemporary national importance.

- The theme for Statistics Day, 2024 is "Use of data for decision-making".

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REPORTS/INDICES

Asia – Pacific Employment and Social Outlook 2024 Report

International Labour Organisation (ILO) has released report for Asia – Pacific Region.

Key Highlights

- Employment to Population Ratio (EPR) improved in region to 58.2% (2023) from 57.4% (2022) mainly due to growth of Employment among Indian Women.

- In India, Old Age Dependency Ratio is projected to increase from 0.10 to 0.22 by 2050.

- Major Acceleration of Productivity Growth is needed in India to achieve High Income Status by 2050.

- Around 76% of Manufacturers in India reported Skilled Labour Shortages.
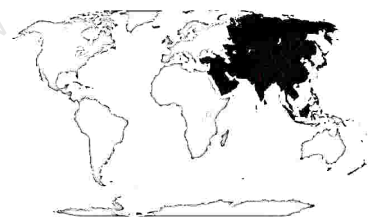
Global Public Debt Hits $97 Trillion in 2023

- A report titled "A World of Debt: A Growing Burden to Global Prosperity", highlights Unprecedented Surge in Global Public Debt, which reached a historic peak of $97 trillion in 2023.

- Report was prepared by UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

Key Findings of Report

- Number of African Countries with Debt – to – GDP Ratios above 60% has increased from 6 to 27 between 2013 and 2023.

- In 2023, Developing Nations paid $847 billion in Net Interest, a 26% increase from 2021.

- 3.3 billion Individuals reside in Nations where Interest Payments exceed spending on Education and Health Combined.

- In 2023, Public Debt in Developing Countries hit $29 trillion or about 30% of Total Worldwide, an increase from a 16% Share in 2010.

UNESCO State of Ocean Report

UNESCO's 'State of Ocean Report, 2024' provides crucial insights into the current state of global oceans, emphasising the challenges posed by climate change and human activities.

UNESCO State of Ocean Report

- Annual Editions released on World Oceans Day (June 8)
  - Initiated during 2022 United Nations Ocean Conference.

- By Inter – Governmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC – UNESCO)

- Serves as an Accessible Overview of Ocean's Current Status.

- Supports Monitoring of UN Decade of Ocean Science for Sustainable Development (2021–2030)

- Encourages Actions towards a Sustainable Ocean Future.

Key Finding of Report

- Upper 2,000 meters of Oceans have experienced significant Warming.

- Oceans are Absorbing about 90% of Earth's Excess Energy, causing increased Deoxygenation and threatening Marine Ecosystems and Human Economies dependent on them.

- Ocean Acidification is on the rise globally, particularly in Open Ocean, with a noted pH decline since the late 1980s.

- Sea Levels have risen consistently since 1993.

Energy Progress Report 2024

Tracking SDG 7: Energy Progress Report 2024 released.

Report is a Joint Effort of 5 SDG 7 Custodian Agencies – International Energy Agency (IEA), International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), World Bank and World Health Organization (WHO).

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 7: To ensure Access to Affordable, Reliable, Sustainable and Modern Energy for All.

Key Highlights

- SDG 7.1.1: Number of People Without Access to Electricity increased for 1st Time in over a decade, reaching 685 million.
  - Factors: Global Energy Crisis, Inflation, Growing Debt Distress in Low-Income Countries etc.
  - India: 11 million People lack access in 2022.

- SDG 7.1.2: 2.1 billion People Live Without Access to Clean Cooking Fuels and Technologies.
  - Implications: 3.2 million Premature Deaths each year.
  - India: Largest Share of Access Deficit, with 360 million People Lacking access.

- SDG 7.2: Share of Renewable energy (RE) in Total Final Energy Consumption (TFEC) was 18.7% in 2021.
  - India: 34.9% Renewable Energy Share in Total Final Energy Consumption.

- SDG 7.3: Average Annual Improvements in Energy Efficiency through 2030 must accelerate to over 3.8% to meet target.

AWARDS/PRIZES

Kavli Prize

Winners of 2024 Kavli Prize were announced. 8 Winners were awarded for their contributions to Astrophysics, Neuroscience & Nanoscience.

Kavli Prize

- Announced in 2008.

- Awarded in honour of Norwegian-American Businessman and Philanthropist Fred Kavli (1927 – 2013).

- Awarded in 3 Areas: Astrophysics, Nanoscience and Neuroscience

- Winners in 2024

  o Astrophysics: David Charbonneau and Sara Seager, For Discoveries of Exoplanets and Characterisation of their Atmosphere.

  o Nanoscience: Robert Langer, Armand Paul Alivisatos and Chad Mirkin, For Biomedical Applications Breakthroughs.

  o Neuroscience: Nancy Kanwisher, Winrich Freiwald and Doris Tsao For their collective effort over decades to map Linkage between Facial Recognition and Brain.

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JUST IN ONE-LINE

- Sub Lieutenant Anamika B. Rajeev made history at INS Rajali, Arakkonam, when she became the first woman in the Indian Navy to fly a helicopter.

- An important Indian wildlife scientist and environmentalist named Asir Jawahar Thomas Johnsingh died in Bengaluru on June 7, 2024.

- Poet and playwright Siddhalinga Pattanashetti has been announced as the recipient of the Gudleppa Hallikeri Award for 2024. Gudleppa Hallikeri Award was named for a famous freedom fighter named Gudleppa Hallikeri who believed in the same things that Mahatma Gandhi did.

- Major Radhika Sen, an Indian peacekeeper in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), won the prestigious UN Military Gender Advocate of the Year award in 2023.

- The 77th Cannes Film Festival- Best Actress award to Anasuya Sengupta for her part in "The Shameless."

- Shrinivas R. Kulkarni, an astronomy professor has been given the prestigious Shaw Prize in Astronomy for 2024. People who have made important achievements in Astronomy, Life Science and Medicine, and Mathematical Sciences are honoured with Shaw Prize.

- Uttar Pradesh's government will build a bioplastic park in the Lakhimpur Kheri area. Bioplastics come from plants that grow back, like corn, sugar beets, and sunflowers.

- In a historic move, Denmark's coalition government approved a plan to put in place the world's first carbon emissions tax that targets farms.

- ABHYAS is a High-Speed Expendable Aerial Target (HEAT) that was made by the Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE) in Bengaluru, India, for the Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO).

- European space industry giants Airbus, OHB, and Thales Alenia Space have signed contracts with ESA to develop large low Earth orbit (LEO) satellite platforms adhering to Zero Debris standards, aiming for a cleaner and safer space environment.