

April 2026 Edition



# UPSC MONTHLY MAGAZINE

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AI Powered Magazine for Smarter UPSC Prep'

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# From the Editor's Desk

Welcome to the April Issue of PadhAI — an AI-powered magazine designed by UPSC experts to make your preparation smarter, faster, and deeply exam-oriented.

## Why This Magazine Exists

Dear Aspirant,

PadhAI Magazine was created from a simple observation: most failures occur not due to lack of effort, but due to three critical gaps—delayed content, scattered resources, and weak exam linkage.

We built this magazine to solve those exact problems.

Most current affairs resources reach you 15–30 days late. By then, exam relevance has already faded.

Relevance is everything in UPSC preparation. A topic that matters today becomes a sideshow in a month

## What Makes This Magazine Different

At PadhAI, we operate differently:

### *Speed & Relevance*

- We publish within a week—so you learn while the topic is still relevant for exams
- You grasp concepts before they become old news, giving you a real head start
- Early understanding means better retention and confidence when these topics appear in questions

### *Exam-Aligned Restructuring*

- We don't report news. We extract exam-aligned concepts
- Every article is built around three core questions:
  - What will Prelims ask?
  - How will Mains expect you to analyze it?
  - What concepts build from this topic?

### *Complete Integration*

- Every article links to previous year questions, practice MCQs, and structured answers
- Alongside this magazine: daily PIB summaries, Current Affairs & GS topics explained, and AI tutor chat support
- One integrated system instead of scattered resources that are wasting your time

## What's Inside This Edition

This April edition brings you the most relevant national and international updates, rewritten into crisp, high-retention smart notes. Each topic is restructured to focus on:

- Concept clarity — What you need to understand
- Governance relevance — Why it matters to India's systems
- Analytical value — How to think about it for both Prelims and Mains

## Our Guiding Philosophy

At PadhAI, everything is built on three principles:

- **Learn only what matters**
- **Learn it the right way**
- **Learn it at the right time**

Let's make learning intelligent — not overwhelming.

—The PadhAI Team

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Subject

# *Polity*



## 1. THE DELIMITATION BILL, 2026: REDRAWING INDIA'S ELECTORAL MAP

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The proposed Delimitation Bill, 2026 has revived debates on **reallocation of parliamentary seats and redrawing of constituencies**, raising concerns over federal balance and political representation.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Delimitation:**
  - A. Process of redrawing boundaries of electoral constituencies.
- II. **Constitutional Basis:**
  - A. Articles 82 and 170 provide for delimitation after Census.
- III. **Freeze on Seats:**
  - A. Seat allocation has been frozen since 1976 (extended till 2026) to encourage population control.
- IV. **Authority:**
  - A. Conducted by the Delimitation Commission of India.

### KEY FEATURES OF THE BILL

- **Reallocation of Seats:** Based on latest population figures.
- **Boundary Redrawing:** Adjusting constituencies for equal representation.

- **Increased Representation:** Likely rise in total Lok Sabha seats.
- **Reservation Adjustment:** Seats reserved for SC/ST may change.

### KEY ISSUES & DEBATES

- I. **North-South Divide:**
  - A. States with higher population growth may gain more seats.
- II. **Federal Concerns:**
  - A. Southern states fear reduced political influence.
- III. **Equity vs Efficiency:**
  - A. Balancing population-based representation with fairness.
- IV. **Political Implications:**
  - A. Changes in electoral dynamics and party strategies.

### SIGNIFICANCE

- **Democratic Representation:** Ensures equal weight to votes.
- **Electoral Fairness:** Addresses population imbalances.
- **Governance Impact:** Alters policy priorities and resource allocation.
- **Federal Balance:** Critical for centre-state relations.

### PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Delimitation:** Redrawing constituency boundaries.
- **Articles 82 & 170:** Provide constitutional basis.
- **Delimitation Commission:** Independent body.



- **Seat Freeze:** In place until 2026.
- **Census:** Basis for delimitation exercise.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

Consider the following statements regarding delimitation:

1. It is based on population data.
2. It is conducted by an independent commission.
3. It has no impact on political representation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*"Delimitation has significant implications for federalism in India."*

Discuss the challenges and consequences of delimitation in the Indian context.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the implications of the Delimitation Bill, 2026 on India's federal structure and democratic representation. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding delimitation in India:

1. It involves redrawing electoral boundaries.
2. It is based on Census data.
3. It is conducted by the Election Commission alone.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 2.LS PASSES JAN VISHWAS AMENDMENT BILL, 2026

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The Lok Sabha has passed the Jan Vishwas Amendment Bill, 2026, aimed at further **decriminalising minor offences and improving ease of doing business** by amending multiple laws.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Criminalisation of Minor Offences:**
  - A. Many laws impose imprisonment for procedural lapses.
- II. **Need for Reform:**
  - A. Over-criminalisation hampers business and judicial efficiency.
- III. **Government Objective:**
  - A. Promote **ease of doing business and reduce litigation**.



## KEY FEATURES

- I. **Decriminalisation:**
  - A. Removal of imprisonment for minor offences.
- II. **Monetary Penalties:**
  - A. Introduction of fines instead of jail terms.
- III. **Rationalisation:**
  - A. Amendments across multiple Acts.
- IV. **Digital Compliance:**
  - A. Encouraging online processes and transparency.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Ease of Doing Business:** Reduces fear of prosecution.
- **Judicial Efficiency:** Lowers burden on courts.
- **Regulatory Reform:** Simplifies compliance framework.
- **Trust-Based Governance:** Shift from punishment to facilitation.

## ISSUES & CONCERNS

- **Deterrence:** Risk of reduced accountability.
- **Implementation:** Ensuring uniform application across sectors.
- **Selective Coverage:** Not all laws may be included.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Economic Growth:** Encourages entrepreneurship and investment.

- **Administrative Efficiency:** Streamlines regulatory processes.
- **Legal Reform:** Modernises outdated provisions.
- **Governance Shift:** From punitive to facilitative approach.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Decriminalisation:** Removal of criminal penalties.
- **Civil Penalty:** Fine instead of imprisonment.
- **Ease of Doing Business:** Simplified regulations.
- **Compliance Burden:** Cost of following rules.
- **Regulatory Reform:** Updating laws for efficiency.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding decriminalisation:*

  1. It replaces imprisonment with monetary penalties.
  2. It reduces compliance burden.
  3. It increases criminal liability.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.
- **Mains PYQ:**

*“Legal reforms are essential for improving governance and economic growth.”*

Discuss the significance of decriminalising minor offences in India.



## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Analyse the objectives and implications of the Jan Vishwas Amendment Bill, 2026.
- How does it contribute to ease of doing business and governance reform? (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding the Jan Vishwas Amendment Bill:

1. It aims to decriminalise minor offences.
2. It replaces imprisonment with monetary penalties.
3. It increases regulatory burden.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

### Options:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 3. THE CONSTITUTION (131ST AMENDMENT) BILL, 2026

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026 has been introduced to bring significant changes in **governance, representation, and institutional functioning**, sparking debate on its implications for India's constitutional framework.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Constitutional Amendments:**
  - A. Governed by Article 368 of the Constitution.
- II. **Need for Amendment:**
  - A. To adapt the Constitution to evolving socio-political realities.
- III. **Historical Context:**
  - A. Multiple amendments have shaped governance and institutional design over time.

### KEY FEATURES

- I. **Structural Changes:**
  - A. Amendments affecting institutional or governance mechanisms.
- II. **Representation Aspects:**
  - A. Possible changes in electoral or political representation.
- III. **Federal Impact:**
  - A. May influence Centre-State relations.
- IV. **Legal Framework:**



- A. Requires parliamentary approval and possibly state ratification.

- **State Ratification:** Needed for federal provisions.
- **Judicial Review:** Supreme Court can review amendments.

## KEY ISSUES & DEBATES

- I. **Federal Balance:**
  - A. Concerns over centralisation vs state autonomy.
- II. **Democratic Integrity:**
  - A. Impact on representation and electoral fairness.
- III. **Judicial Review:**
  - A. Possibility of scrutiny under the **basic structure doctrine**.
- IV. **Political Implications:**
  - A. Changes in power dynamics among states and parties.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Constitutional Evolution:** Reflects adaptability of the Constitution.
- **Governance Reform:** Addresses emerging challenges.
- **Institutional Impact:** May reshape functioning of key bodies.
- **Federal Dynamics:** Influences Centre-State relations.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Article 368:** Procedure for constitutional amendment.
- **Basic Structure Doctrine:** Limits Parliament's amending power.
- **Special Majority:** Required for most amendments.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding constitutional amendments:*

  1. Article 368 deals with amendment procedures.
  2. All amendments require state ratification.
  3. Amendments can be reviewed by the judiciary.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 3 only.
- **Mains PYQ:**

*"The Constitution is a living document."*

Discuss the role of constitutional amendments in addressing contemporary challenges while preserving core principles.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the significance of constitutional amendments in India.
- Discuss the potential implications of the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026 on governance and federalism. (150 words)



# PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding constitutional amendments in India:

1. They are governed by Article 368.
2. All amendments require approval of state legislatures.
3. They are subject to judicial review.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

### Options:

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 4.ANTI-DEFECTION LAW

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The Anti-Defection Law has been under scrutiny due to recent political developments involving party switching and delays in decisions by presiding officers, raising concerns about its effectiveness.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Origin:**
  - A. Introduced by the 52nd Constitutional Amendment Act 1985.

- II. **Constitutional Provision:**
  - A. Added as the **Tenth Schedule** of the Constitution.
- III. **Further Reform:**
  - A. Strengthened by the 91st Constitutional Amendment Act 2003.

### KEY PROVISIONS

- I. **Grounds for Disqualification:**
  - A. Voluntarily giving up party membership.
  - B. Voting/abstaining against party whip.
- II. **Independent Members:**
  - A. Disqualified if they join a party after the election.
- III. **Nominated Members:**
  - A. Can join a party within 6 months.
- IV. **Exception:**
  - A. Merger allowed if 2/3rd members agree.

### ROLE OF PRESIDING OFFICER

- I. Decision on disqualification is made by:
  - A. Speaker (Lok Sabha/State Assembly)
  - B. Chairman (Rajya Sabha/Legislative Council)
- II. Subject to judicial review (as per *Kihoto Hollohan v. Zachillhu*).

### KEY ISSUES & CRITICISM

- I. **Delay in Decisions:**



- A. Speakers may delay rulings for political reasons.
- II. **Partisan Bias:**
- A. Presiding officers may act in favour of the ruling party.
- III. **Reduced Legislative Freedom:**
- A. Limits MPs/MLAs from voting independently.
- IV. **Mass Defections via Merger:**
- A. Loophole allowing group defections.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Political Stability:** Prevents frequent government collapse.
- **Party Discipline:** Ensures coherence in policymaking.
- **Ethical Politics:** Discourages opportunistic defections.
- **Democratic Integrity:** Maintains voter mandate.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Tenth Schedule:** Contains Anti-Defection provisions.
- **Whip:** Directive issued by political party.
- **Merger Clause:** 2/3rd members can merge without disqualification.
- **Speaker's Role:** Decides disqualification.
- **Judicial Review:** Allowed after decision.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding the Anti-Defection Law:*

1. It was introduced by the 52nd Amendment.
2. It is part of the Tenth Schedule.
3. It allows unrestricted freedom to legislators to vote against party lines.

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

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*"The Anti-Defection Law has ensured stability but weakened parliamentary democracy."*

*Critically examine.*

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Discuss the objectives and provisions of the Anti-Defection Law.
- Critically analyse its effectiveness in ensuring political stability and democratic accountability. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding the Anti-Defection Law:*

1. It is included in the Tenth Schedule of the Constitution.



2. The Speaker's decision is final and cannot be challenged in court.
3. A merger by two-thirds members is exempt from disqualification.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer: A**

## 5.MADRAS HC: GOVERNOR BOUND BY CABINET ADVICE UNDER ARTICLE 161

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The Madras High Court has clarified that the Governor must act on the **aid and advice of the Council of Ministers** while exercising powers under Article 161, reinforcing constitutional limits on gubernatorial discretion.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Article 161:**
  - A. Empowers the Governor to grant pardons, reprieves, respites, or remissions of punishment.
- II. **Constitutional Scheme:**
  - A. The governor acts as a **nominal executive**, bound by elected government advice.

### III. **Judicial Precedents:**

- A. Courts have repeatedly limited discretionary powers of Governors.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE JUDGMENT

- **Binding Advice:** Governor must act on Cabinet advice in most cases.
- **Limited Discretion:** Only in rare, exceptional situations.
- **Delay Issue:** Undue delay in decisions can be subject to judicial scrutiny.
- **Rule of Law:** Executive power must follow constitutional principles.

## RELATED CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS

- **Article 154:** Executive power of the State vested in the Governor.
- **Article 163:** Governor acts on aid and advice of the Council of Ministers.
- **Article 161:** Power to grant pardons.

## KEY ISSUES

- I. **Governor vs State Government:**
  - A. Frequent conflicts over powers and decisions.
- II. **Delay in Clemency Decisions:**
  - A. Raises questions of fairness and justice.
- III. **Discretion Debate:**
  - A. Extent of Governor's independent authority.



- A. Extent of Governor's independent authority.

3. The Governor has absolute discretion in all matters. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Reinforces Parliamentary Democracy:** Elected सरकार has primacy.
- **Limits Arbitrary Power:** Prevents misuse of constitutional authority.
- **Strengthens Federalism:** Protects state government's role.
- **Ensures Accountability:** Governor's actions subject to legal scrutiny.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*"The role of the Governor has often been controversial in India's federal system."*

Discuss with reference to constitutional provisions and recent judicial interpretations.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Article 161:** Governor's pardoning power.
- **Article 163:** Aid and advice of Council of Ministers.
- **Clemency Powers:** Pardon, reprieve, remission, commutation.
- **Governor:** Constitutional head of state.
- **Judicial Review:** Courts can examine misuse of power.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the constitutional position of the Governor in India.
- In light of recent judgments, discuss the extent to which the Governor is bound by the advice of the Council of Ministers. (150 words)

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding the Governor.*

1. The Governor is bound by the advice of the Council of Ministers.
2. Article 161 deals with pardoning power.

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding Article 161:*

1. It gives the Governor the power to grant pardons.
2. The Governor must always act independently of the Council of Ministers.
3. The exercise of this power can be subject to judicial review.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?



**Options:**

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 6.SC INVOKES ARTICLE 142 TO DEEM ASSENT FOR 10 STALLED TAMIL NADU BILLS

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The Supreme Court of India invoked Article 142 to deem assent for 10 Bills passed by the Tamil Nadu Assembly, which had been pending with the Governor, marking a significant development in Centre–State relations.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Legislative Process (State):**
  - A. Bills passed by the State Legislature require Governor’s assent (Article 200).
- II. **Issue:**
  - A. Prolonged delay by Governor in granting or withholding assent.
- III. **Judicial Intervention:**
  - A. Courts stepped in to resolve constitutional impasse.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- I. **Use of Article 142:**

- A. Ensures “complete justice” in cases where legal remedies are inadequate.
- II. **Deemed Assent:**
  - A. Bills treated as approved despite no formal assent.
- III. **Time Factor:**
  - A. Court noted unreasonable delay in decision-making.
- IV. **Precedent Value:**
  - A. Expands scope of judicial intervention in legislative matters.

### CONSTITUTIONAL PROVISIONS INVOLVED

- **Article 200:** Governor’s assent to State Bills.
- **Article 201:** Reservation of Bills for President.
- **Article 142:** Supreme Court’s power to do complete justice.

### KEY ISSUES & DEBATES

- I. **Judicial Overreach vs Necessity:**
  - A. Whether the Court exceeded its mandate or acted to uphold democracy.
- II. **Governor’s Role:**
  - A. Lack of time limits for assent decisions.
- III. **Federal Balance:**
  - A. Tensions between Centre-appointed Governor and elected State government.
- IV. **Separation of Powers:**



- A. Judiciary entering legislative-executive domain.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Prevents Governance Paralysis:** Resolves legislative deadlocks.
- **Strengthens Democracy:** Upholds the will of the elected legislature.
- **Clarifies Constitutional Practice:** Signals limits on gubernatorial delay.
- **Expands Article 142 Scope:** Reinforces Court's proactive role.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Article 142:** Power of Supreme Court to do complete justice.
- **Article 200:** Governor's assent to Bills.
- **Deemed Assent:** Treated as approved without formal action.
- **Federalism:** Division of powers between Centre and States.
- **Judicial Activism:** Active role of judiciary in governance issues.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**  
*Consider the following statements regarding constitutional provisions:*
  1. Article 142 allows the Supreme Court to pass orders for complete justice.
  2. Article 200 deals with Governor's assent to Bills.
  3. The Governor must decide on Bills within a fixed time limit.

- **Mains PYQ:**  
*"Judicial intervention is sometimes necessary to resolve constitutional deadlocks."*  
Discuss in the context of Article 142 and recent developments.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the constitutional issues arising from delays in gubernatorial assent to State Bills.
- Discuss the significance of the Supreme Court invoking Article 142 to resolve such deadlocks. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding Article 142:*

1. It empowers the Supreme Court to ensure complete justice.
2. It allows the Court to override all constitutional provisions permanently.
3. It has been used in exceptional cases to resolve legal deadlocks.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 3 only  
B. 2 and 3 only



- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 7. DIGITAL PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE (DPI) @2047 REPORT RELEASED BY NITI AAYOG

### WHY IN NEWS?

- NITI Aayog has released the **DPI @2047 Report**, outlining a long-term roadmap for strengthening India's Digital Public Infrastructure to support inclusive growth and governance.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI):**
  - A. Digital systems enabling public service delivery at scale.
- II. **India Stack:**
  - A. Foundational DPI including Aadhaar, UPI, and DigiLocker.
- III. **Global Recognition:**
  - A. India's DPI model is being adopted by several countries.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT

- I. **Expansion of DPI Ecosystem:**
  - A. Beyond finance into health, education, agriculture.
- II. **Interoperability:**
  - A. Seamless integration across platforms.

- III. **Data Governance:**
  - A. Emphasis on privacy, security, and consent.
- IV. **Innovation:**
  - A. Encouraging startups and private sector participation.
- V. **Global Outreach:**
  - A. Positioning India as a leader in digital public goods.

### KEY COMPONENTS OF DPI

- **Digital Identity:** Aadhaar
- **Payments:** UPI
- **Data Exchange:** Account Aggregator framework
- **Service Platforms:** DigiLocker, CoWIN

### SIGNIFICANCE

- **Inclusive Growth:** Enables access to services for all citizens.
- **Economic Efficiency:** Reduces transaction costs and leakages.
- **Governance Reform:** Improves transparency and accountability.
- **Global Leadership:** Positions India as a digital model for developing nations.

### CHALLENGES

- **Digital Divide:** Unequal access to internet and devices.
- **Data Privacy Concerns:** Risks of misuse of personal data.
- **Cybersecurity Threats:** Increasing digital vulnerabilities.
- **Institutional Capacity:** Need for skilled workforce and infrastructure.



## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **DPI:** Digital systems for public service delivery.
- **Aadhaar:** Biometric digital identity.
- **UPI:** Real-time payment system.
- **DigiLocker:** Digital document storage.
- **India Stack:** Set of digital public platforms.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding Digital Public Infrastructure:*

1. It includes digital identity and payment systems.
2. It promotes inclusive service delivery.
3. It is limited only to financial services.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*"Digital Public Infrastructure is transforming governance in India."*  
Discuss its role in promoting inclusive growth and addressing governance challenges.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the role of Digital Public Infrastructure in transforming

governance and economic development in India.

- Discuss the vision outlined in the DPI @2047 Report. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding DPI:*

1. It includes systems like Aadhaar and UPI.
2. It improves service delivery and inclusion.
3. It is restricted to government use only.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 8.SC REAFFIRMS SC STATUS LIMITED TO HINDUISM, SIKHISM, AND BUDDHISM

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The Supreme Court of India has reiterated that **Scheduled Caste (SC) status is currently restricted to persons professing Hinduism, Sikhism, or Buddhism**, as per existing legal provisions.



## BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Constitutional Basis:**
  - A. Article 341 empowers the President to specify SCs.
- II. **1950 Order:**
  - A. Initially limited SC status to Hindus.
- III. **Subsequent Amendments:**
  - A. Extended to Sikhs (1956) and Buddhists (1990).
- IV. **Rationale:**
  - A. Linked to historical practice of untouchability within certain religions.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Legal Position:** SC status remains religion-specific.
- **Judicial Stand:** Court has upheld the existing framework.
- **Pending Debate:** Inclusion of Dalits from other religions under SC category.
- **Policy Sensitivity:** Linked to reservation and welfare benefits.

## KEY ISSUES & DEBATES

- I. **Equality vs Historical Basis:**
  - A. Whether benefits should depend on religion.
- II. **Conversion Question:**
  - A. Loss of SC status upon conversion.
- III. **Social Reality:**
  - A. Persistence of caste discrimination across religions.

- IV. **Legal Challenge:**
  - A. Petitions seeking extension of SC status to all Dalits.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Reservation Policy:** Affects access to affirmative action.
- **Social Justice Debate:** Highlights gaps in current framework.
- **Constitutional Interpretation:** Balancing equality and historical context.
- **Policy Implications:** Potential impact on future reforms.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Article 341:** President specifies Scheduled Castes.
- **1950 Presidential Order:** Defines SC categories.
- **Reservation:** Affirmative action for disadvantaged groups.
- **Untouchability:** Abolished under Article 17.
- **Dalits:** Socially disadvantaged communities.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding Scheduled Castes:*

  1. SC status is defined under Article 341.
  2. It is currently limited to certain religions.



3. It automatically applies to all disadvantaged groups irrespective of religion. Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- B. 2 and 3 only  
C. 1 and 3 only  
D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer: A**

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

• **Mains PYQ:**

*"Affirmative action policies must evolve with changing social realities."*

Discuss the issues surrounding religion-based classification of Scheduled Castes in India.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE

### QUESTION

- Examine the constitutional and social issues related to limiting Scheduled Caste status to certain religions.
- Discuss the arguments for and against extending SC status to all Dalits irrespective of religion. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC

### MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding Scheduled Castes:

1. They are identified under Article 341.
2. SC status is currently limited to certain religions.
3. Conversion to another religion does not affect SC status.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only



Subject

# *International Relations*



## I. CHINA–PAKISTAN 5-POINT WEST ASIA PEACE PLAN: DIPLOMACY IN A FRACTURED REGION

### WHY IN NEWS?

- China and Pakistan have jointly proposed a **5-point peace plan for West Asia**, amid ongoing regional tensions, aiming to position themselves as **diplomatic stakeholders in conflict resolution**.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **West Asia Conflict:**
  - A. Long-standing tensions involving Israel–Palestine and regional rivalries.
- II. **China's Role:**
  - A. Increasing diplomatic engagement (e.g., Iran–Saudi rapprochement).
- III. **Pakistan's Position:**
  - A. Historically supportive of the Palestinian cause.
- IV. **Global Context:**
  - A. Multipolar world with emerging diplomatic actors beyond traditional Western powers.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Ceasefire Emphasis:** Immediate halt to hostilities in conflict zones.

- **Dialogue Promotion:** Encourages political negotiations among stakeholders.
- **Humanitarian Focus:** Calls for aid access and civilian protection.
- **Two-State Solution:** Reaffirms support for Israel–Palestine resolution framework.
- **Geopolitical Significance:** Signals China's expanding global diplomatic footprint.

### PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **West Asia:** Region including Middle East countries.
- **Two-State Solution:** Independent Israel and Palestine coexisting.
- **Gaza Strip:** Palestinian territory facing conflict.
- **China's Diplomacy:** Increasing role in global conflict mediation.
- **Pakistan's Stand:** Supports Palestinian statehood.

### PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding West Asia:*

  1. The Gaza Strip is a Palestinian territory.
  2. The Two-State Solution refers to resolving the Israel–Palestine conflict.
  3. China has no diplomatic involvement in West Asia.

Which of the statements given



above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

• **Mains PYQ:**

*“West Asia remains a region of persistent conflict and strategic importance.”*

Discuss the role of emerging powers like China in shaping peace processes in West Asia.

C. 2 and 3 only

D. 1 and 3 only

**Answer:** A

## 2.INDIA HAS RARE OPPORTUNITY TO RE-IMAGINE NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICY: TRADE IS KEY

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Analyse the significance of the China–Pakistan 5–point peace plan for West Asia.
- Discuss its implications for regional stability and the evolving global diplomatic order. (150 words)

## WHY IN NEWS?

- Amid shifting regional geopolitics and economic realignments, India is seen as having a **strategic opportunity to reshape its neighbourhood policy**, with **trade and connectivity emerging as central tools of engagement**.

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding the China–Pakistan peace proposal:

1. It emphasizes ceasefire and humanitarian assistance.
2. It supports a two–state solution to the Israel–Palestine conflict.
3. It reflects China’s growing diplomatic role in global conflicts.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1, 2, and 3  
B. 1 and 2 only

## BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Neighbourhood First Policy:**
  - A. Focus on strengthening ties with South Asian neighbours.
- II. **Regional Challenges:**
  - A. Political instability, economic crises, and external influence.
- III. **Trade Potential:**
  - A. Intra–regional trade in South Asia remains low (~5% of total trade).
- IV. **Key Platforms:**
  - A. SAARC (limited effectiveness).
  - B. BIMSTEC as an alternative regional grouping.



## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Trade as Diplomacy:** Economic integration can build trust and interdependence.
- **Connectivity Push:** Infrastructure, digital links, and energy grids enhance cooperation.
- **Countering Influence:** Reduces dependence of neighbours on external powers.
- **Mutual Growth:** Promotes shared prosperity and regional stability.
- **Policy Shift:** From aid-based to partnership-based engagement.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Neighbourhood First Policy:** India's regional diplomacy approach.
- **SAARC:** South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.
- **BIMSTEC:** Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation.
- **Intra-Regional Trade:** Very low in South Asia (~5%).
- **Connectivity Projects:** Roads, railways, ports, energy corridors.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**  
*Consider the following statements regarding regional cooperation:*
  1. SAARC aims to promote economic and regional integration.

2. Intra-regional trade in South Asia is high compared to other regions.
  3. Connectivity projects can enhance regional cooperation.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 3 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**  
*"Economic diplomacy is key to strengthening regional relations."*  
Discuss the role of trade and connectivity in India's neighbourhood policy.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Analyse the role of trade and connectivity in reshaping India's neighbourhood policy.
- Discuss the challenges and opportunities in enhancing regional cooperation in South Asia. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding India's neighbourhood policy:*

1. Trade and economic integration can strengthen regional ties.
2. SAARC has been highly effective in promoting regional integration.
3. Connectivity projects can improve cooperation among neighbouring countries.



Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3

**Answer:** A

### 3.US–CHINA REBALANCE: FIVE WAYS INDIA MUST RESPOND

#### WHY IN NEWS?

- The evolving relationship between the United States and China—marked by competition and selective cooperation—is prompting strategic reassessment globally, including **India's foreign and economic policy choices.**

#### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Strategic Rivalry:**
  - A. Trade tensions, technology restrictions, Indo-Pacific competition.
- II. **Selective Cooperation:**
  - A. Climate change, global finance, and crisis management.
- III. **India's Position:**
  - A. Strategic autonomy with partnerships (e.g., Quad).
- IV. **Global Order:**
  - A. Transition toward a multipolar system.

#### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **1. Strategic Balancing:** Maintain autonomy while deepening ties with the U.S. without provoking China unnecessarily.
- **2. Economic Positioning:** Leverage supply chain diversification to attract investment shifting from China.
- **3. Defence Preparedness:** Strengthen border infrastructure and military capabilities.
- **4. Regional Leadership:** Enhance role in South Asia and Indo-Pacific institutions.
- **5. Technology & Trade Policy:** Build domestic capabilities in semiconductors, AI, and critical sectors.

#### PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Indo-Pacific:** Strategic region spanning Indian and Pacific Oceans.
- **Quad:** India, U.S., Japan, Australia grouping.
- **Strategic Autonomy:** Independent foreign policy approach.
- **Supply Chain Diversification:** Reducing dependence on a single country.
- **Multipolarity:** Power distributed among multiple global actors.



## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

Consider the following statements regarding global geopolitics:

1. Strategic autonomy allows a country to pursue independent policies.
2. Multipolarity refers to dominance by a single global power.
3. Supply chain diversification reduces dependency risks.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 3 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*"India must navigate great power rivalry with strategic prudence."*

Discuss the implications of U.S.–China relations for India and suggest policy responses.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Analyse the evolving dynamics of the U.S.–China relations.
- Discuss the opportunities and challenges for India and suggest strategic responses to safeguard national interests. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding the U.S.–China relations:

1. They are characterized by both competition and cooperation.
2. Supply chain diversification can benefit countries like India.
3. Multipolarity means dominance by one superpower.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3

**Answer:** A

## 4.TWO-TIER UNSC REFORM AND G4 PROPOSAL ON UNSC REFORMS

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The debate on reforming the United Nations Security Council has intensified, with the G4 Nations pushing for a **two-tier reform model** to make the Council more representative and effective.

## BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **UNSC Structure:**



- A. 5 Permanent Members (P5) with veto power.
- B. 10 Non-Permanent Members elected for 2-year terms.
- II. **Historical Basis:**
  - A. Designed after World War II (1945 power structure).
- III. **Issue:**
  - A. Under-representation of Asia, Africa, and Latin America.
- IV. **G4 Push:**
  - A. India, Germany, Japan, Brazil seek permanent membership expansion.

- Enhanced representation for developing countries.
- Willingness to forgo immediate veto expansion (in many proposals).

## KEY ISSUES & CHALLENGES

- **Opposition from P5:** Resistance to dilution of power.
- **Veto Power Deadlock:** No agreement on reforming veto system.
- **Geopolitical Rivalries:** Competing regional claims (especially in Asia).
- **Consensus Requirement:** UN reform requires broad global agreement.

## KEY FEATURES OF TWO-TIER PROPOSAL

- I. **Tier 1: Permanent Members (Expanded)**
  - A. Addition of new permanent members (G4 and others).
- II. **Tier 2: Long-Term/Elected Members**
  - A. Longer tenure than current non-permanent members.
- III. **Veto Reform Debate**
  - A. Limiting, regulating, or reforming veto use (not consensus yet).
- IV. **Greater Regional Balance**
  - A. Improved representation from developing regions.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Reflects Multipolar World:** Aligns UNSC with current global order.
- **Improved Legitimacy:** Makes decisions more globally acceptable.
- **Voice for Global South:** Enhances representation of developing nations.
- **Strengthened Multilateralism:** Improves credibility of the UN system.

## G4 PROPOSAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Expansion of permanent membership category.
- Inclusion of major emerging economies.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **UNSC:** Key organ for international peace and security.
- **P5 Members:** USA, UK, France, Russia, China.
- **Veto Power:** Ability to block substantive resolutions.
- **G4 Nations:** India, Germany, Japan, Brazil.
- **UN Charter:** Legal foundation of UN system.



## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

Consider the following statements regarding the UNSC:

1. It has five permanent members.
2. Each member has veto power.
3. India is currently a permanent member.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

"The UN Security Council reflects the power structure of the post-Second World War era."

Discuss the need for reforms in the UNSC in the context of changing global realities.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the G4 proposal and the two-tier model for UNSC reform.
- Discuss the challenges in achieving meaningful reform of the United Nations Security Council. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding UNSC reform proposals:

1. The G4 countries seek expansion of permanent membership.

2. The UNSC currently has 15 members.
3. All UNSC members have veto power.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 5..BANGLADESH-INDIA TIES: AVOIDING PAST MISTAKES, BUILDING FUTURE TRUST

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Evolving political and economic dynamics in Bangladesh have renewed focus on **India-Bangladesh relations**, with emphasis on avoiding past frictions and strengthening long-term cooperation with India.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Historical Link:**

- A. India played a key role in Bangladesh's independence in 1971.

- II. **Areas of Cooperation:**

- A. Trade, energy, connectivity, counter-terrorism.

- III. **Key Challenges:**

- A. Teesta river water sharing dispute.



- B. Border management and illegal migration concerns.

IV. **Regional Context:**

- A. Strategic competition with China in infrastructure and investments.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Trade Expansion:** Bangladesh is a major trade partner in South Asia.
- **Connectivity Boost:** Rail, road, and inland waterways improving integration.
- **Security Cooperation:** Joint efforts against extremism and border crimes.
- **Unresolved Issues:** Water disputes and migration remain sensitive.
- **Strategic Importance:** Stable ties crucial for India's neighbourhood policy.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **1971 War:** Led to creation of Bangladesh.
- **Teesta River:** Major unresolved water-sharing issue.
- **Land Boundary Agreement (2015):** Resolved enclave issues.
- **Border:** One of India's longest international borders.
- **Trade:** Bangladesh among India's top trading partners in South Asia.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding India–Bangladesh relations:*

1. The Land Boundary Agreement resolved enclave issues.
  2. Teesta water sharing is fully resolved.
  3. Bangladesh is an important trade partner for India.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 3 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*“Neighbourhood relations are key to India's foreign policy.”*

Discuss the importance of India–Bangladesh relations and the challenges that need to be addressed.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Analyse the significance of India–Bangladesh relations in the context of regional stability and economic cooperation.
- Discuss the challenges and suggest measures to strengthen bilateral ties. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding India–Bangladesh relations:*



1. The Land Boundary Agreement (2015) resolved enclave issues.
2. The Teesta water dispute has been fully resolved.
3. Bangladesh is a key trade partner for India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3

**Answer:** A

## 6. DEVELOPING COUNTRIES LAUNCH BORROWERS' PLATFORM AT IMF-WORLD BANK SPRING MEETINGS 2026

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Developing countries have launched the first-ever **Borrowers' Platform** during the IMF–World Bank Spring Meetings 2026 to collectively address rising debt vulnerabilities and strengthen their bargaining power in global financial negotiations.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Rising Debt Burden:**
  - A. Many developing countries face high external debt due to global economic shocks, interest rate

hikes, and currency depreciation.

- II. **Existing Gaps:**
  - A. Debt negotiations are often **bilateral and fragmented**, weakening debtor positions.
- III. **Global Financial Institutions:**
  - A. Institutions like the International Monetary Fund and World Bank play key roles in lending and restructuring frameworks.

### KEY FEATURES OF BORROWERS' PLATFORM

- I. **Collective Negotiation:**
  - A. Enables developing countries to coordinate debt restructuring demands.
- II. **Information Sharing:**
  - A. Exchange of data on debt terms, risks, and best practices.
- III. **Policy Coordination:**
  - A. Unified positions in global financial discussions.
- IV. **Technical Support:**
  - A. Capacity building for debt management strategies.
- V. **Advocacy Role:**
  - A. Stronger voice in reforms of global financial architecture.

### KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED

- **Debt Distress:** High repayment burdens in many low-income countries.
- **Lack of Coordination:** Fragmented creditor-debtor negotiations.



- **Unequal Bargaining Power:** Weak position of individual countries.
- **Slow Restructuring:** Delays in debt relief processes.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Stronger Negotiation Power:** Collective voice improves leverage.
- **Debt Sustainability:** Encourages long-term fiscal stability.
- **Global Financial Reform:** Pushes for fairer debt architecture.
- **South–South Cooperation:** Strengthens solidarity among developing nations.
- **Crisis Prevention:** Early coordination reduces risk of defaults.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Sovereign Debt:** Money borrowed by governments.
- **Debt Restructuring:** Modification of repayment terms.
- **IMF:** Provides financial stability support.
- **World Bank:** Provides development financing.
- **Debt Distress:** Inability to meet repayment obligations.

## PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**  
*Consider the following statements regarding sovereign debt.*
  1. It is borrowed by governments.

2. It is always denominated in domestic currency.
  3. Debt restructuring may involve changing repayment terms.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 3 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**  
*“Rising sovereign debt is a major challenge for developing economies.”*  
Discuss the causes and implications of debt distress and suggest cooperative global solutions.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the significance of the Borrowers’ Platform launched at the IMF–World Bank Spring Meetings 2026.
- How can it help developing countries address the challenges of rising sovereign debt? (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding the Borrowers’ Platform:*

1. It aims to improve coordination among developing countries on debt issues.
2. It is led exclusively by developed countries.
3. It seeks to strengthen bargaining power in debt negotiations.



Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 7.FRANCE AND THE UK RENEW SANDHURST TREATY TO CURB ILLEGAL CROSSINGS ACROSS THE ENGLISH CHANNEL

### WHY IN NEWS?

- France and the United Kingdom have renewed the **Sandhurst Treaty** to strengthen cooperation in preventing illegal migration across the English Channel.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Migration Pressure:**
  - A. Increasing irregular migration flows across the English Channel.
- II. **Earlier Agreement:**
  - A. Original Sandhurst Treaty signed in 2018 for cooperation on border security.
- III. **Key Route:**
  - A. The English Channel is a major maritime route for irregular migration into the UK.

## KEY FEATURES OF THE RENEWED TREATY

- I. **Joint Border Patrols:**
  - A. Enhanced coordination between French and UK authorities.
- II. **Surveillance Systems:**
  - A. Use of drones, radar, and coastal monitoring.
- III. **Financial Support:**
  - A. UK funding to France for border enforcement infrastructure.
- IV. **Intelligence Sharing:**
  - A. Improved data exchange on smuggling networks.
- V. **Anti-Smuggling Operations:**
  - A. Targeting human trafficking networks.

### KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED

- **Illegal Migration:** Unsafe crossings in small boats.
- **Human Trafficking:** Organized smuggling networks.
- **Border Security:** Need for coordinated maritime control.
- **Humanitarian Concerns:** Risks of deaths at sea.

### SIGNIFICANCE

- **Stronger Bilateral Cooperation:** Enhances UK–France relations.
- **Migration Management:** Reduces pressure on asylum systems.
- **Security Enhancement:** Improves maritime surveillance.



- **Regional Stability:** Helps manage EU–UK migration dynamics.
- **Human Safety:** Aims to prevent dangerous crossings.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Sandhurst Treaty:** UK–France agreement on border security cooperation.
- **English Channel:** Narrow sea between southern UK and northern France.
- **Illegal Migration:** Unauthorized cross-border movement.
- **Human Smuggling:** Facilitating illegal entry for profit.
- **Maritime Surveillance:** Monitoring sea routes for security.

## PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding migration routes:*

1. The English Channel separates the UK and France.
2. It is a major route for irregular migration into Europe.
3. It is located in the Indian Ocean.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*“Migration control requires both security measures and humanitarian considerations.”*

Discuss in the context of international cooperation on illegal migration.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the significance of the renewed Sandhurst Treaty between France and the UK.
- How does it address the challenges of illegal migration across the English Channel? (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding the Sandhurst Treaty:*

1. It involves cooperation between France and the United Kingdom.
2. It aims to address illegal migration across the English Channel.
3. It is a treaty between India and France.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A



## 8.INDIA APPROVES ₹30 BILLION WITHDRAWAL FOR MALDIVES UNDER SAARC CURRENCY SWAP FRAMEWORK

### WHY IN NEWS?

- India has approved a ₹30 billion financial assistance withdrawal for Maldives under the SAARC Currency Swap Framework to support macroeconomic stability and liquidity needs.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **SAARC Currency Swap Framework:**
  - A. A regional mechanism under the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation.
- II. **Objective:**
  - A. Provide short-term foreign exchange support to member countries.
- III. **India's Role:**
  - A. Acts as a key contributor due to its larger foreign exchange reserves.
- IV. **Maldives Economic Context:**
  - A. High dependence on tourism and external financing.

### KEY FEATURES OF THE ASSISTANCE

- I. **Swap Facility Utilisation:**
  - A. Withdrawal from India's allocated swap window.

- II. **Short-Term Liquidity Support:**
  - A. Helps meet immediate foreign currency needs.
- III. **Stabilisation Objective:**
  - A. Supports exchange rate and external balance stability.
- IV. **Regional Cooperation:**
  - A. Strengthens SAARC financial integration framework.

### KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED

- I. **Foreign Exchange Pressure:**
  - A. Addressing dollar liquidity shortages.
- II. **Debt and Import Needs:**
  - A. Supporting import financing requirements.
- III. **Financial Stability:**
  - A. Preventing balance of payments stress.
- IV. **Regional Vulnerability:**
  - A. Small economies prone to external shocks.

### SIGNIFICANCE

- **Strengthens India-Maldives Relations:** Enhances diplomatic ties.
- **Regional Leadership:** Reinforces India's role in South Asia.
- **Financial Stability:** Helps prevent economic crisis in Maldives.
- **SAARC Relevance:** Keeps regional financial cooperation active.
- **Strategic Influence:** Strengthens India's "Neighbourhood First" policy.



Subject

# *Economy*



## I. GLOBAL TENSIONS AND INDIA'S ECONOMY: NAVIGATING UNCERTAINTY IN A FRACTURED WORLD

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Rising geopolitical conflicts and economic fragmentation—particularly involving powers like the United States, China, and ongoing crises in West Asia—are impacting **global trade, energy prices, and financial stability**, with direct implications for India's economy.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Geopolitical Flashpoints:**
  - A. U.S.–China rivalry, Russia–Ukraine conflict, West Asia instability.
- II. **Economic Transmission Channels:**
  - A. Oil prices, trade disruptions, currency volatility.
- III. **India's Position:**
  - A. Emerging economy with growing global integration.
- IV. **Policy Framework:**
  - A. Focus on Atmanirbhar Bharat, supply chain resilience, diversification.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Energy Shock Risk:** Conflicts can increase oil prices, affecting inflation and fiscal balance.
- **Trade Disruptions:** Supply chain fragmentation impacts exports and imports.
- **Investment Flows:** India can attract investment shifting away from high-risk regions.
- **Currency Volatility:** Global uncertainty affects rupee stability and capital flows.
- **Strategic Opportunity:** Scope to strengthen domestic manufacturing and global partnerships.

### PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Supply Chain Disruption:** Interruptions in global production networks.
- **Inflation Transmission:** Imported inflation via fuel and commodities.
- **Capital Flows:** Movement of investment across borders.
- **Atmanirbhar Bharat:** Policy for self-reliance.
- **Energy Dependence:** India imports ~85% of crude oil.

### PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding global economy:*

  1. Geopolitical tensions can disrupt supply chains.



2. Oil price shocks can influence inflation.
3. Global conflicts have no impact on domestic economies.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*“Global geopolitical developments have direct economic consequences.”*

Discuss the impact of global tensions on India’s economy and suggest measures to enhance resilience.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE

### QUESTION

- Analyse the impact of global geopolitical tensions on India’s economy.
- Discuss the challenges posed by energy dependence, trade disruptions, and financial volatility, and suggest policy measures to mitigate risks. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC

### MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding global tensions and economy:

1. Geopolitical conflicts can disrupt global supply chains.
2. Oil price increases can lead to inflation in importing countries.
3. Global tensions have no effect on capital flows.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3

**Answer:** A

## 2.COMMERCIAL LPG & JET FUEL RATES INCREASED: COST PUSH PRESSURES RETURN

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Prices of **commercial LPG** and **Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF)** have been increased, raising concerns over **inflationary pressures, aviation costs, and service sector pricing.**

## BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Commercial LPG:**
  - A. Used by hotels, eateries, and businesses (different from subsidised domestic LPG).
- II. **ATF (Jet Fuel):**
  - A. Major cost component for airlines (~30–40% of operating cost).
- III. **Pricing Mechanism:**
  - A. Linked to international crude oil prices and exchange rates.



#### IV. **Global Context:**

- A. Supply disruptions and geopolitical tensions influence fuel prices.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Cost-Push Inflation:** Higher fuel prices increase cost of goods and services.
- **Aviation Impact:** Airlines may raise ticket prices.
- **Service Sector Effect:** Restaurants and hospitality may pass on costs to consumers.
- **Fiscal Implications:** Potential pressure on subsidies and taxation debates.
- **External Dependence:** India's reliance on imported crude oil drives price volatility.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **LPG Types:** Domestic (subsidised) vs commercial (market-linked).
- **ATF:** Aviation fuel derived from crude oil.
- **Pricing:** Market-linked, influenced by global crude prices.
- **Inflation Type:** Cost-push inflation.
- **Energy Imports:** India imports ~85% of crude oil.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**  
*Consider the following statements regarding inflation:*

1. Cost-push inflation occurs due to increase in production costs.
  2. Fuel price rise can contribute to inflation.
  3. Inflation is unaffected by global commodity prices.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*"Energy prices have a significant impact on the economy."*

Discuss how rising fuel prices affect inflation, growth, and fiscal stability in India.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Analyse the impact of rising commercial LPG and ATF prices on India's economy.
- Discuss their implications for inflation, service sectors, and policy responses. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding fuel price increases:*

1. Rising fuel prices can lead to cost-push inflation.
2. Aviation turbine fuel is a major cost component for airlines.
3. Commercial LPG prices are fully subsidised by the government.



2. They have high pricing power in markets.
3. They are sensitive to input cost fluctuations.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 3 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*"MSMEs are the backbone of India's economy but face structural challenges."*

Discuss the impact of rising input costs on MSMEs and suggest policy measures to support them.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Analyse the impact of rising steel prices on MSMEs in India.
- Discuss the challenges faced by the sector and suggest policy measures to mitigate cost pressures and improve competitiveness. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding MSMEs and input costs:

1. Rising steel prices can increase production costs for MSMEs.
2. MSMEs generally have strong pricing power to pass on cost increases.
3. Input cost inflation can affect competitiveness of small enterprises.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3

**Answer:** A

## 4. BETWEEN OIL SHOCK AND EL NIÑO: HOW HIGH COULD INFLATION GO?

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Rising global crude prices alongside the impact of El Niño are raising concerns about a potential **inflation surge in India**, driven by both **energy and food price shocks**.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Oil Shock:**
  - A. India imports ~85% of crude oil, making it vulnerable to global price increases.
- II. **El Niño Effect:**
  - A. Associated with **weaker monsoon in India**, affecting crop yields.
- III. **Inflation Types:**
  - A. Cost-push (fuel) + food inflation (supply shocks).
- IV. **Policy Framework:**
  - A. RBI targets inflation at 4% ( $\pm 2\%$ ).



## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Fuel Price Impact:** Higher crude oil raises transport and production costs.
- **Food Inflation Risk:** Poor monsoon reduces agricultural output.
- **Combined Shock:** Simultaneous rise in fuel and food prices intensifies inflation.
- **Fiscal Pressure:** Subsidies and welfare spending may increase.
- **Monetary Policy Challenge:** RBI may face pressure to adjust interest rates.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **El Niño:** Warming of Pacific Ocean waters affecting global weather.
- **Inflation Target:**  $4\% \pm 2\%$  (RBI).
- **CPI:** Consumer Price Index measures retail inflation.
- **Cost-Push Inflation:** Due to rising input costs.
- **Food Inflation:** Driven by supply-side disruptions.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

Consider the following statements regarding inflation:

1. Oil price increases can cause cost-push inflation.
2. El Niño can affect agricultural output in India.
3. Inflation is unaffected by weather conditions.

Which of the statements given

above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*"External shocks and climate variability pose risks to macroeconomic stability."*

Discuss the impact of oil price shocks and climate events like El Niño on inflation in India.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Analyse the combined impact of oil price shocks and El Niño on inflation in India.
- Discuss the challenges for monetary and fiscal policy in managing such dual shocks. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding inflation drivers:

1. Oil price increases can lead to cost-push inflation.
2. El Niño can disrupt agricultural production.
3. Food inflation is independent of weather conditions.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only



- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3

**Answer:** A

## 5. CREDIT DEFAULT SWAPS (CDS)

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Credit Default Swaps (CDS) have gained attention amid rising global debt risks and financial market volatility, as investors seek instruments to hedge against **sovereign and corporate default risks**.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Origin:**
  - A. Emerged in the 1990s as tools for managing credit risk.
- II. **Global Relevance:**
  - A. Played a major role during the Global Financial Crisis 2008.
- III. **Market Use:**
  - A. Used by banks, investors, and hedge funds.

### HOW CDS WORK

- I. **Parties Involved:**
  - A. Buyer (seeks protection)
  - B. Seller (provides protection)
- II. **Mechanism:**
  - A. Buyer pays periodic premium.
  - B. Seller compensates if borrower defaults.
- III. **Reference Asset:**

- A. Bond or loan whose default risk is being covered.

### KEY FEATURES

- I. **Risk Transfer:**
  - A. Transfers credit risk from one party to another.
- II. **Tradable Instrument:**
  - A. Can be bought and sold in financial markets.
- III. **Pricing:**
  - A. CDS spread reflects perceived default risk.
- IV. **Flexibility:**
  - A. Used for hedging or speculation.

### KEY ISSUES & RISKS

- I. **Speculation:**
  - A. Can be used without owning the underlying asset.
- II. **Systemic Risk:**
  - A. Interconnected exposures can trigger financial instability.
- III. **Lack of Transparency:**
  - A. Over-the-counter nature reduces visibility.
- IV. **Counterparty Risk:**
  - A. Risk that the seller may not pay in case of default.

### SIGNIFICANCE

- **Risk Management:** Helps investors hedge against default.
- **Market Signals:** CDS spreads indicate creditworthiness.



- **Liquidity:** Enhances functioning of bond markets.
- **Financial Innovation:** Key tool in modern finance.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **CDS:** Insurance-like contract against default.
- **Credit Risk:** Risk of borrower failing to repay.
- **CDS Spread:** Cost of protection.
- **Derivative:** Financial contract based on underlying asset.
- **Default:** Failure to meet debt obligations.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**  
*Consider the following statements regarding Credit Default Swaps:*
  1. They are used to hedge credit risk.
  2. They function like insurance contracts.
  3. They eliminate all financial risks.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?  
**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.
- **Mains PYQ:**  
*“Financial derivatives are double-edged swords.”*  
Discuss with reference to Credit Default Swaps and their role in financial stability.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Explain the concept of Credit Default Swaps (CDS).
- Discuss their role in financial markets and associated risks. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding CDS:*

1. They are financial derivatives.
2. They provide protection against credit default.
3. They completely eliminate financial risk.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- Options:**
- A. 1 and 2 only
  - B. 2 and 3 only
  - C. 1 and 3 only
  - D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A



## 6. RBI BARS BANKS FROM NON-DELIVERABLE DERIVATIVE (NDD) CONTRACTS IN RUPEE

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The Reserve Bank of India has barred banks from engaging in **Non-Deliverable Derivative (NDD) contracts in the rupee** to curb misuse, enhance transparency, and stabilise the currency market.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- Non-Deliverable Derivatives (NDDs):**
  - Financial contracts settled in foreign currency without actual delivery of underlying currency.
- Offshore Markets:**
  - Rupee trading occurs in global financial centres outside India.
- Regulatory Concern:**
  - Offshore markets operate beyond direct RBI control.

### KEY FEATURES OF THE MEASURE

- Restriction on Banks:**
  - Indian banks barred from participating in NDD contracts in rupee.
- Focus on Onshore Market:**
  - Encourages trading within regulated domestic markets.
- Monitoring & Transparency:**

- Improves regulatory oversight of currency transactions.
- Curbing Speculation:**
    - Limits excessive volatility caused by offshore trading.

### KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED

- Currency Volatility:**
  - Offshore speculation impacting rupee exchange rate.
- Regulatory Arbitrage:**
  - Exploiting differences between domestic and foreign regulations.
- Market Fragmentation:**
  - Split between onshore and offshore currency markets.
- Lack of Transparency:**
  - Limited visibility in offshore transactions.

### SIGNIFICANCE

- Currency Stability:** Reduces speculative pressure on rupee.
- Stronger Regulation:** Enhances RBI's control over forex markets.
- Market Integrity:** Promotes transparent and orderly trading.
- Financial Stability:** Reduces systemic risks from derivatives exposure.

### PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- NDD (Non-Deliverable Derivative):** Settled without actual currency delivery.



- **Forex Market:** Market for trading currencies.
- **Speculation:** Trading for profit from price changes.
- **Regulatory Arbitrage:** Exploiting regulatory differences.
- **Onshore vs Offshore Market:** Domestic vs foreign trading platforms.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding derivatives:*

1. They derive value from underlying assets.
2. They can be used for hedging risk.
3. They are always risk-free instruments.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*“Financial market regulations are crucial for maintaining economic stability.”*

Discuss in the context of foreign exchange market interventions by central banks.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Explain the concept of Non-Deliverable Derivatives (NDDs).

- Analyse the rationale behind RBI's decision to restrict banks from such contracts in the rupee. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding Non-Deliverable Derivatives:*

1. They are settled without actual delivery of currency.
2. They are commonly traded in offshore markets.
3. They eliminate exchange rate risk completely.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 7.PRODUCTION LINKED INCENTIVE (PLI) SCHEME FOR FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRY (PLISFPI)

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The Production Linked Incentive Scheme for the Food Processing Industry has been highlighted recently as a key initiative to strengthen India's



food processing sector and boost value addition.

- Reduce **wastage and improve efficiency**.

## BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

## SIGNIFICANCE

- I. **PLI Scheme:**
  - A. Introduced to boost manufacturing across sectors.
- II. **Food Processing Sector:**
  - A. Critical for reducing post-harvest losses and increasing farmer income.
- III. **Need for Scheme:**
  - A. Low level of processing and limited value addition in agriculture.

- **Farmer Income Growth:** Better price realisation.
- **Industrial Development:** Boosts food processing industry.
- **Export Promotion:** Enhances global presence of Indian products.
- **Food Security:** Improves storage and supply chains.

## KEY FEATURES

## CHALLENGES

- I. **Incentive-Based Support:**
  - A. Financial incentives linked to incremental sales.
- II. **Target Segments:**
  - A. Ready-to-eat foods, marine products, processed fruits and vegetables, etc.
- III. **Brand Promotion:**
  - A. Support for Indian brands in global markets.
- IV. **Supply Chain Strengthening:**
  - A. Encourages investment in infrastructure and logistics.

- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Cold storage and logistics issues.
- **MSME Participation:** Smaller players may face barriers.
- **Quality Standards:** Meeting global norms.
- **Implementation Efficiency:** Ensuring timely disbursement of incentives.

## OBJECTIVES

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- Increase **value addition in agriculture**.
- Promote **exports of processed food products**.
- Generate **employment opportunities**.

- **PLI Scheme:** Incentive linked to production.
- **Food Processing:** Conversion of raw food into value-added products.
- **Value Addition:** Increasing product worth.
- **Cold Chain:** Temperature-controlled supply system.
- **Agri-Exports:** Export of agricultural products.



## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

Consider the following statements regarding PLI schemes:

1. They provide incentives based on production.
2. They aim to boost manufacturing.
3. They are limited only to the IT sector.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*"Food processing is a key driver of agricultural transformation."*

Discuss the role of government initiatives in promoting the food processing sector in India.

1. It provides incentives linked to incremental sales.
2. It aims to boost value addition in agriculture.
3. It discourages exports of processed food products.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 8. "VISHWA SUTRA – WEAVES OF INDIA FOR THE WORLD"

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The Ministry of Textiles has launched **"Vishwa Sutra – Weaves of India for the World"** to promote India's rich textile heritage and enhance global outreach of handloom and handicraft products.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Indian Textile Sector:**

- A. One of the largest employment generators.

- II. **Handloom & Handicrafts:**

- A. Reflect India's cultural diversity and heritage.

- III. **Need for Initiative:**

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the objectives and significance of the PLI Scheme for the Food Processing Industry.
- How can it contribute to agricultural growth and export promotion? (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding the PLI Scheme for Food Processing Industry:



- A. Limited global visibility and competition from machine-made products.

## KEY FEATURES

- I. **Global Promotion:**
  - A. Showcasing Indian weaves in international markets.
- II. **Brand Building:**
  - A. Creating a unified identity for Indian textiles.
- III. **Artisan Support:**
  - A. Enhancing income opportunities for weavers.
- IV. **Export Orientation:**
  - A. Boosting textile exports.
- V. **Cultural Diplomacy:**
  - A. Promoting India's soft power globally.

## OBJECTIVES

- Strengthen **global presence of Indian textiles**.
- Improve **livelihoods of artisans and weavers**.
- Promote **sustainable and traditional crafts**.
- Enhance **export competitiveness**.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Economic Growth:** Boosts textile sector contribution.
- **Employment Generation:** Supports rural livelihoods.
- **Cultural Preservation:** Protects traditional weaving techniques.

- **Global Branding:** Positions India as a textile hub.

## CHALLENGES

- **Competition:** From synthetic and mass-produced textiles.
- **Market Access:** Limited reach of small artisans.
- **Infrastructure Gaps:** Need for better logistics and marketing.
- **Quality Standardisation:** Meeting global norms.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Handloom:** Textile production using manual looms.
- **Handicrafts:** Handmade products reflecting culture.
- **GI Tag:** Protection for region-specific products.
- **Textile Exports:** Major contributor to India's economy.
- **Artisan Economy:** Livelihood based on traditional skills.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding the textile sector.*

  1. It is a major employment generator in India.
  2. Handloom products are machine-made.
  3. Textile exports contribute to the economy.



Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 3 only.

• **Mains PYQ:**

*“The textile sector plays a crucial role in India’s economy and cultural identity.”*

Discuss the importance of promoting traditional textiles in the global market.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE

### QUESTION

- Examine the significance of initiatives like “Vishwa Sutra – Weaves of India for the World” in promoting India’s textile sector and cultural heritage. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC

### MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding textile initiatives:

1. They aim to promote Indian weaves globally.
2. They support artisan livelihoods.
3. They discourage exports.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A



Subject

# *Geography*



## 1. MOST PARTS OF INDIA TO SEE MORE HEATWAVE DAYS: IMD WARNING

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast that **most parts of India will experience above-normal heatwave days**, raising concerns over **public health, agriculture, and energy demand**.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Heatwave Definition (IMD):**
  - A. Temperature  $\geq 40^{\circ}\text{C}$  in plains, with deviations from normal.
- II. **Recent Trends:**
  - A. Increasing frequency of extreme temperature events in India.
- III. **Climate Link:**
  - A. Global warming intensifies heat extremes.
- IV. **Vulnerable Sectors:**
  - A. Agriculture, water resources, health systems, and power supply.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Rising Heatwave Days:** Above-normal conditions expected across India.
- **Health Risks:** Heatstroke, dehydration, and mortality risks increase.
- **Agricultural Impact:** Crop stress and reduced yields.

- **Energy Demand:** Higher electricity consumption for cooling.
- **Urban Heat Islands:** Cities experience more intense heat.

### PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Heatwave Criteria:** Based on temperature thresholds and deviation.
- **El Niño Impact:** Warmer conditions, weaker monsoon possible.
- **Urban Heat Island:** Higher temperatures in cities due to infrastructure.
- **Climate Change:** Long-term rise in global temperatures.
- **IMD Role:** Weather forecasting and climate monitoring.

### PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding heatwaves:*

  1. They are influenced by global climate patterns like El Niño.
  2. Urban areas can experience higher temperatures due to the heat island effect.
  3. Heatwaves have no impact on agriculture.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.
- **Mains PYQ:**

*"Climate change is increasing the frequency of extreme weather events."*

Discuss the causes and impacts of



heatwaves in India and suggest mitigation and adaptation measures.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE

### QUESTION

- Analyse the causes and impacts of increasing heatwave events in India.
- Discuss the role of climate change and suggest strategies for mitigation and adaptation. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC

### MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding heatwaves in India:

1. They can be influenced by El Niño conditions.
2. Urban heat islands can intensify heatwaves.
3. Heatwaves have no effect on energy demand.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

#### Options:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3

**Answer:** A

## 2.DRY DAYS IN INDIA

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Dry days are frequently declared during elections, national holidays, and sensitive events, raising questions about their **legal basis, effectiveness, and socio-economic impact.**

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Alcohol Regulation:**
  - A. Falls under the State List (Seventh Schedule).
- II. **Administrative Control:**
  - A. States enforce dry days through excise laws.
- III. **Election Context:**
  - A. The Election Commission of India mandates dry days before polling.
- IV. **Cultural Context:**
  - A. Observed on key national and religious occasions.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Election Integrity:** Prevents voter inducement through alcohol.
- **Public Order:** Reduces chances of disturbances.
- **Symbolic Value:** Marks respect on national days.
- **Economic Impact:** Temporary loss of excise revenue.
- **Limited Effectiveness:** May lead to black market sales.



## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **State Subject:** Alcohol regulation.
- **Dry Day:** Ban on sale, not necessarily consumption.
- **Excise Revenue:** Major source for states.
- **Election Rule:** Mandatory dry period before polling.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding alcohol regulation in India:*

1. It is a State subject.
2. Dry days are often declared during elections.
3. The central government solely regulates alcohol policy.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*"Regulation of intoxicants reflects both governance and social priorities."*

Discuss the rationale behind dry days in India and evaluate their effectiveness.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the concept of dry days in India.

- Discuss their objectives, legal basis, and effectiveness in achieving policy goals. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding dry days in India:*

1. They prohibit the sale of alcohol on specific days.
2. They are imposed only by the central government.
3. They are commonly used during elections.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 3. CLIMATE CHANGE AS A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Rising global temperatures, extreme weather events, and environmental degradation have led experts and organizations like the World Health Organization to increasingly frame **climate change as a public health**



**emergency**, not just an environmental issue.

## BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Climate Change:**
  - A. Long-term changes in temperature and weather patterns.
- II. **Health Link:**
  - A. Environmental changes influence disease patterns and health risks.
- III. **Global Recognition:**
  - A. Climate-health nexus gaining policy importance worldwide.
- IV. **India's Context:**
  - A. High population density and climate vulnerability increase risks.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Heatwaves & Mortality:** Rising temperatures lead to heatstroke and deaths.
- **Vector-Borne Diseases:** Expansion of diseases like malaria and dengue.
- **Air Pollution:** Worsens respiratory and cardiovascular diseases.
- **Food & Water Security:** Climate impacts nutrition and access to safe water.
- **Mental Health:** Disasters and displacement increase psychological stress.

## HEALTH IMPACT PATHWAYS

- **Direct Effects:** Heatwaves, floods, cyclones.
- **Indirect Effects:** Food shortages, disease spread, economic stress.
- **Systemic Effects:** Strain on healthcare infrastructure.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Heatwave:** Extreme high temperatures affecting health.
- **Vector-Borne Diseases:** Spread by insects (e.g., mosquitoes).
- **Air Pollution:** Major contributor to premature deaths.
- **Climate Resilience:** Ability to adapt to climate impacts.
- **One Health Approach:** Integrates human, animal, and environmental health.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding climate change and health:*

  1. Climate change can influence the spread of infectious diseases.
  2. Heatwaves can increase mortality rates.
  3. Climate change has no impact on food security.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.



- **Mains PYQ:**

*“Climate change is not just an environmental issue but a public health crisis.”*

Discuss the impact of climate change on public health and suggest measures to strengthen health system resilience.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE

### QUESTION

- Examine how climate change poses a public health emergency.
- Discuss its impacts on vulnerable populations and suggest strategies for mitigation and adaptation. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC

### MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding climate change and public health:

1. It can increase the spread of vector-borne diseases.
2. It can lead to heat-related illnesses.
3. It has no effect on mental health.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 4.NHAI ROAD ENCROACHES WETLAND: NGT INTERVENES

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has taken cognisance of a case where a road project by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) allegedly **encroached upon a wetland**, raising concerns over **environmental compliance and ecosystem protection**.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Wetlands:**
  - A. Ecosystems saturated with water (marshes, lakes, floodplains).
- II. **Legal Framework:**
  - A. Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules 2017 regulate protection and use.
- III. **Role of NGT:**
  - A. Adjudicates environmental disputes and ensures enforcement of laws.
- IV. **Development vs Environment:**
  - A. Increasing conflicts due to infrastructure expansion.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Encroachment Issue:** Road construction allegedly altered or damaged wetland area.
- **Ecological Impact:** Loss of biodiversity, disruption of hydrology.



- **Flood Risk:** Wetlands act as natural buffers—encroachment increases flood vulnerability.
- **Legal Scrutiny:** NGT can impose penalties and order restoration.
- **Governance Gap:** Need for better environmental impact assessments (EIA).

## IMPORTANCE OF WETLANDS

- **Flood Control:** Absorb excess water.
- **Biodiversity Hotspots:** Habitat for flora and fauna.
- **Water Purification:** Natural filtration systems.
- **Carbon Sink:** Help mitigate climate change.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **NGT Established:** 2010.
- **Wetlands Rules:** 2017.
- **Ramsar Convention:** International treaty for wetland conservation.
- **EIA:** Environmental Impact Assessment for projects.
- **NHAI:** Develops national highways.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding wetlands:*

1. They help in flood control.
2. They have no role in biodiversity conservation.

3. They act as natural water filters.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 3 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*“Balancing development and environmental protection is a key governance challenge.”*

Discuss the importance of wetlands and the role of regulatory mechanisms in their conservation.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Analyse the ecological importance of wetlands and examine the challenges posed by infrastructure development.
- Discuss the role of regulatory institutions like NGT in ensuring sustainable development. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding wetlands in India:*

1. They act as natural flood buffers.
2. They are regulated under Wetlands Rules 2017.
3. They have no role in climate regulation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

A. 1 and 2 only



- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 5.INDIA'S FORESTS MAY DOUBLE CARBON STORAGE BY 2100

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Recent studies suggest that India's forests could **potentially double their carbon storage capacity by 2100**, offering a major boost to climate mitigation efforts and helping India meet its commitments under the Paris Agreement.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Carbon Sequestration:**
  - A. Process by which trees absorb CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere.
- II. **India's Climate Commitments:**
  - A. Target to create an additional carbon sink of **2.5–3 billion tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent**.
- III. **Forest Cover:**
  - A. Around 21–24% of India's geographical area.
- IV. **Policy Framework:**
  - A. National Afforestation Programme, Green India Mission.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Enhanced Carbon Sink:** Forests can significantly absorb atmospheric carbon.
- **Climate Mitigation:** Reduces greenhouse gas concentration.
- **Biodiversity Benefits:** Improved ecosystems support wildlife.
- **Livelihood Support:** Forests sustain local and tribal communities.
- **Long-Term Potential:** Gains depend on conservation and sustainable practices.

### CHALLENGES

- **Deforestation & Degradation:** Reduces carbon storage potential.
- **Forest Fires:** Release stored carbon back into the atmosphere.
- **Encroachment & Development:** Pressure from infrastructure projects.
- **Climate Stress:** Changing rainfall and temperature patterns affect forest health.

### PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Carbon Sink:** Natural system that absorbs more carbon than it emits.
- **Green India Mission:** Afforestation and ecosystem restoration programme.
- **Paris Agreement:** Global climate treaty (2015).
- **REDD+:** Mechanism for reducing emissions from deforestation.
- **Forest Types:** Tropical, temperate, montane, mangroves.



## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER

### SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

Consider the following statements regarding carbon sequestration:

1. Forests act as carbon sinks.
2. Deforestation increases atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> levels.
3. Carbon sequestration has no role in climate mitigation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

“Forests play a crucial role in climate change mitigation.”

Discuss the potential of forests as carbon sinks and the challenges in enhancing their capacity in India.

1. Forests absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.
2. Deforestation can reduce carbon storage capacity.
3. Forests have no role in climate regulation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 6.GENE THERAPY ACCEPTED, CROP CHANGES RESISTED: A BIOTECH PARADOX

### WHY IN NEWS?

- While breakthroughs in gene therapy are being widely accepted in medicine, resistance continues toward genetically modified (GM) or gene-edited crops—highlighting a policy and perception gap in biotechnology governance.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE

### QUESTION

- Analyse the role of forests in carbon sequestration in India.
- Discuss the opportunities and challenges in enhancing forest-based carbon sinks to meet climate goals. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC

### MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding forests and carbon storage:

## BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Gene Therapy:**

- A. Medical technique that modifies genes to treat diseases (e.g., inherited disorders).

- II. **GM / Gene-Edited Crops:**



- A. Crops altered for traits like pest resistance or higher yield.
- III. **Regulatory Landscape:**
  - A. Human therapies often undergo strict clinical trials.
  - B. Agricultural biotech faces environmental and food safety scrutiny.

Risk Perception	Individual	Environmental & food chain
Regulation	Clinical trials	Biosafety approvals

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- I. **Public Perception Gap:**
  - A. Life-saving therapies are more easily accepted than food-related changes.
- II. **Risk vs Benefit Visibility:**
  - A. Immediate benefits in healthcare vs perceived long-term risks in agriculture.
- III. **Regulatory Differences:**
  - A. Stricter, more transparent frameworks in medical biotech.
- IV. **Food Security Angle:**
  - A. GM crops can improve yield, resilience, and nutrition.
- V. **Ethical Concerns:**
  - A. Biodiversity loss, corporate control over seeds, and ecological risks.

## COMPARISON

Aspect	Gene Therapy	GM Crops
Purpose	Treat diseases	Improve crop traits
Acceptance	High	Controversial

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Gene Therapy:** Modification of genes to treat disease.
- **GM Crops:** Genetically altered for desired traits.
- **CRISPR-Cas9:** Gene-editing technology.
- **Bt Cotton:** Only widely approved GM crop in India.
- **Biosafety:** Assessment of environmental and health risks.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**  
*Consider the following statements regarding biotechnology.*
  1. Gene therapy is used to treat genetic disorders.
  2. GM crops can be engineered for pest resistance.
  3. Biotechnology has no ethical concerns.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?  
**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.
- **Mains PYQ:**  
*"Biotechnology offers solutions but raises ethical and regulatory challenges."*



Discuss the contrasting acceptance of gene therapy and GM crops, highlighting the issues involved.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE

### QUESTION

- Examine the reasons behind the greater acceptance of gene therapy compared to genetically modified crops.
- Discuss the regulatory, ethical, and socio-economic factors influencing this divergence. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC

### MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding biotechnology applications:*

1. Gene therapy is used to treat diseases by modifying genes.
2. GM crops can enhance agricultural productivity.
3. Public acceptance of biotechnology is uniform across sectors.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

#### Options:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A



Subject

# *Environment & Ecology*



## I. BHAVASAGARA REFERRAL CENTRE DESIGNATED AS NATIONAL REPOSITORY FOR DEEP-SEA FAUNA

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change has designated the Centre for Marine Living Resources and Ecology's "**Bhavasagara**" Referral Centre as a **National Repository for Deep-Sea Fauna**.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Deep-Sea Ecosystems:**
  - A. Among the least explored regions with unique biodiversity.
- II. **India's Marine Research:**
  - A. Increasing focus under Deep Ocean Mission.
- III. **Need for Repository:**
  - A. Scientific documentation and conservation of marine life.

### KEY FEATURES

- I. **Specimen Collection:**
  - A. Storage of deep-sea fauna samples.
- II. **Research Support:**
  - A. Facilitates taxonomy, ecology, and biodiversity studies.
- III. **Data Repository:**
  - A. Maintains scientific records and databases.
- IV. **Collaboration:**

- A. Supports national and international research partnerships.

### OBJECTIVES

- Document and conserve **deep-sea biodiversity**.
- Support **scientific research and innovation**.
- Strengthen India's role in **marine science**.
- Facilitate **policy and conservation planning**.

### SIGNIFICANCE

- **Biodiversity Conservation:** Protects unique marine species.
- **Scientific Advancement:** Enhances ocean research capabilities.
- **Blue Economy:** Supports sustainable use of marine resources.
- **Global Contribution:** Adds to international marine knowledge.

### CHALLENGES

- **Technological Limitations:** Deep-sea exploration is complex and costly.
- **Data Gaps:** Limited knowledge of deep-sea ecosystems.
- **Environmental Risks:** Threats from deep-sea mining and climate change.
- **Capacity Building:** Need for skilled researchers and infrastructure.



## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **CMLRE:** Marine research institute under MoES.
- **Deep-Sea Fauna:** Organisms living in ocean depths.
- **Blue Economy:** Sustainable use of ocean resources.
- **Deep Ocean Mission:** India's initiative for ocean exploration.
- **Marine Biodiversity:** Variety of life in oceans.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding marine biodiversity:*

1. Deep-sea ecosystems are highly explored.
2. They host unique species adapted to extreme conditions.
3. Marine biodiversity is important for ecological balance.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 2 and 3 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*"Marine biodiversity is crucial for ecological sustainability and economic development."*

Discuss in the context of India's initiatives for ocean research and conservation.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE

### QUESTION

- Examine the significance of establishing a National Repository for Deep-Sea Fauna in India.
- How can it contribute to marine research and conservation? (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC

### MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding deep-sea fauna:*

1. They are found in ocean depths under extreme conditions.
2. They are well documented and fully explored.
3. They contribute to marine biodiversity.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A



## 2.COMPLIANCE EASED FOR MANAGING PLASTIC WASTE

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The government has eased compliance norms under plastic waste regulations to **reduce the burden on businesses while improving implementation efficiency** under the Plastic Waste Management Rules 2016.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Plastic Waste Challenge:**
  - A. India generates large volumes of plastic waste annually.
- II. **Regulatory Framework:**
  - A. Governed by Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 (amended subsequently).
- III. **EPR Mechanism:**
  - A. Producers responsible for collection and recycling of plastic waste.
- IV. **Issues in Compliance:**
  - A. Complex reporting requirements, cost burden, and enforcement gaps.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Ease of Compliance:** Simplified registration and reporting processes.
- **EPR Flexibility:** Adjustments in targets and timelines for producers.
- **Digital Tracking:** Use of online portals for monitoring plastic waste.

- **Industry Relief:** Reduced compliance burden for MSMEs and recyclers.
- **Environmental Concern:** Risk of dilution of strict enforcement.

### PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **EPR:** Responsibility of producers for post-consumer waste.
- **Single-Use Plastics Ban:** Implemented in India since 2022 (selected items).
- **CPCB:** Central Pollution Control Board monitors compliance.
- **Recycling:** Key method for plastic waste management.
- **Circular Economy:** Reuse and recycling of materials.

### PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding plastic waste management:*

  1. EPR makes producers responsible for waste collection.
  2. Plastic waste has no environmental impact.
  3. Recycling is a method of waste management.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 3 only.
- **Mains PYQ:**

*“Plastic waste management requires a balance between regulation and economic activity.”*



Discuss the effectiveness of India's plastic waste management framework and suggest improvements.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE

### QUESTION

- Analyse the recent easing of compliance norms for plastic waste management in India.
- Discuss its implications for environmental sustainability and ease of doing business. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding plastic waste management rules:

1. Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) applies to producers of plastic.
2. Compliance easing may reduce regulatory burden.
3. Plastic waste has no impact on ecosystems.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

#### Options:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 3.CAG REPORT: SHRINKING LAKES IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

### WHY IN NEWS?

- A report by the Comptroller and Auditor General of India has revealed that **518 lakes (74%) in Jammu and Kashmir have disappeared or shrunk**, raising concerns over ecological degradation and climate vulnerability.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Importance of Lakes:**
  - A. Provide water resources, support biodiversity, and regulate climate.
- II. **Wetland Ecosystems:**
  - A. Act as natural buffers against floods and droughts.
- III. **Regional Context:**
  - A. Jammu and Kashmir is known for its rich network of lakes and wetlands.

### KEY FINDINGS OF THE REPORT

- I. **Extent of Loss:**
  - A. 74% of lakes have shrunk or disappeared.
- II. **Encroachment:**
  - A. Urban expansion and illegal occupation of lake areas.
- III. **Pollution:**
  - A. Discharge of untreated sewage and solid waste.
- IV. **Administrative Gaps:**



- A. Weak enforcement and lack of coordinated management.

## KEY ISSUES

- I. **Ecosystem Degradation:**
  - A. Loss of aquatic biodiversity and habitat destruction.
- II. **Water Scarcity:**
  - A. Reduced freshwater availability.
- III. **Climate Vulnerability:**
  - A. Loss of natural climate regulators.
- IV. **Urbanisation Pressure:**
  - A. Expansion into wetland areas.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Environmental Impact:** Highlights urgent need for wetland conservation.
- **Climate Security:** Lakes play a role in regulating local climate.
- **Biodiversity Protection:** Essential for sustaining flora and fauna.
- **Policy Attention:** Calls for better governance and restoration efforts.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **CAG:** Constitutional authority auditing government performance.
- **Wetlands:** Water-saturated ecosystems supporting biodiversity.
- **Eutrophication:** Nutrient enrichment causing water degradation.
- **Encroachment:** Illegal occupation of land.
- **Climate Regulation:** Role of ecosystems in moderating climate.

## PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding wetlands:*

1. They support biodiversity.
2. They help in flood control.
3. They have no role in climate regulation.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*"Wetlands are critical for ecological balance and climate resilience."*

Discuss the challenges in wetland conservation in India.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the causes and consequences of shrinking lakes in Jammu and Kashmir.
- How does it impact ecological sustainability and climate security? (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding lakes and wetlands:*

1. They help in maintaining ecological balance.
2. Their degradation can increase climate vulnerability.
3. They are unaffected by urbanisation.



Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 4. GLOBAL CONCERNS VS NATIONAL INTEREST: WHY INDIA LOST INTEREST IN HOSTING COP33

### WHY IN NEWS?

- India has reportedly shown reluctance in hosting COP33 under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), reflecting a shift in balancing **global climate leadership with domestic priorities**.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **COP (Conference of Parties):**
  - A. Annual climate summit under UNFCCC.
- II. **India's Role:**
  - A. Key player among developing nations advocating **climate justice**.
- III. **Previous COP Hosts:**
  - A. Countries use it to showcase climate leadership and diplomacy.
- IV. **Current Context:**

- A. Rising global climate expectations vs domestic economic pressures.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **High Hosting Costs:** Infrastructure, logistics, and security expenses.
- **Limited Tangible Gains:** Diplomatic prestige may not translate into economic benefits.
- **Domestic Priorities:** Focus on growth, energy security, and welfare.
- **Geopolitical Signalling:** India may prefer negotiating power without hosting burden.
- **Climate Responsibility Debate:** Developed vs developing country obligations.

### REASONS FOR RELUCTANCE

- **Resource Allocation:** Funds better used for domestic climate action.
- **Energy Transition Challenges:** Continued reliance on coal.
- **Equity Concerns:** Developed nations' unmet climate finance commitments.
- **Strategic Autonomy:** Avoid overcommitment under global pressure.

### IMPLICATIONS

- **Global Perception:** May affect India's climate leadership image.
- **Negotiation Strategy:** Focus on substance over symbolism.



- **Domestic Policy Focus:** Greater emphasis on internal climate resilience.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **UNFCCC:** 1992 treaty on climate change.
- **COP:** Annual decision-making body of UNFCCC.
- **Climate Finance:** Support from developed to developing nations.
- **Climate Justice:** Equity in climate responsibilities.
- **Net Zero:** Balance between emissions and removal.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**  
*Consider the following statements regarding global climate governance:*
  1. COP is held annually under UNFCCC.
  2. Developing countries demand climate finance.
  3. Hosting COP guarantees economic benefits.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.
- **Mains PYQ:**  
*"Balancing national interest with global commitments is a key challenge in climate diplomacy."*

Discuss the reasons behind India's reluctance to host COP33 and its implications for climate governance.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the factors behind India's reluctance to host COP33.
- Discuss how countries balance national interests with global climate responsibilities. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding COP summits:*

1. They are held under the UNFCCC framework.
2. Hosting COP automatically ensures economic gains.
3. They are forums for global climate negotiations.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A



## 5.DRAFT TAR-BALLS MANAGEMENT RULES, 2026

- A. Preparedness for large-scale pollution events.

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change has issued the **Draft Tar-balls Management Rules, 2026** to address marine pollution caused by toxic oil residues along India's coastline.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- Tar Balls:**
  - Sticky lumps of oil formed from weathered crude oil in oceans.
- Sources:**
  - Oil spills, ship discharges, offshore drilling activities.
- Environmental Concern:**
  - Harm marine life and contaminate beaches.

### KEY FEATURES

- Identification & Monitoring:**
  - Regular surveillance of coastal areas.
- Collection Mechanism:**
  - Scientific and safe removal of tar balls.
- Disposal Protocols:**
  - Environmentally sound treatment and disposal.
- Institutional Responsibility:**
  - Roles assigned to coastal states and agencies.
- Emergency Response:**

### OBJECTIVES

- Reduce **marine and coastal pollution**.
- Protect **biodiversity and ecosystems**.
- Ensure **public health and coastal cleanliness**.
- Strengthen **environmental governance**.

### SIGNIFICANCE

- Marine Conservation:** Safeguards aquatic ecosystems.
- Tourism Protection:** Maintains clean beaches.
- Public Health:** Prevents exposure to toxic substances.
- Regulatory Framework:** Provides structured response to pollution.

### CHALLENGES

- Implementation Capacity:** Coordination among agencies.
- Monitoring Gaps:** Difficulty in tracking offshore pollution sources.
- Technical Expertise:** Need for specialised cleanup methods.
- Funding Requirements:** High cost of cleanup operations.

### PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- Tar Balls:** Weathered oil residues in oceans.



- **Marine Pollution:** Contamination of marine environment.
- **Oil Spill:** Release of liquid petroleum into water bodies.
- **Coastal Ecosystem:** Interconnected marine and land systems.
- **Environmental Regulation:** Rules to protect the environment.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding marine pollution:*

1. Oil spills can harm marine ecosystems.
2. Tar balls are harmless natural formations.
3. Coastal pollution affects biodiversity.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 3 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*"Marine pollution poses a serious threat to ecological and economic sustainability."*

Discuss measures to control marine pollution in India.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the significance of the Draft Tar-balls Management Rules, 2026 in addressing marine pollution in India.
- What challenges may arise in their implementation? (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding tar balls:*

1. They originate from oil pollution in oceans.
2. They are harmless to marine life.
3. They can affect coastal ecosystems.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 6. THE STATE OF INDIA'S BATS (2024-25) REPORT

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The first-ever national assessment, **"The State of India's Bats (2024-25)"**, highlights growing concerns over **neglect, data gaps, and rising threats to bat species** across India.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Bat Diversity in India:**
  - A. India hosts over 130 species of bats.
- II. **Ecological Role:**



- A. Key contributors to pollination, seed dispersal, and pest control.

III. **Neglect:**

- A. Bats receive less conservation focus compared to other wildlife.

## KEY FINDINGS

I. **Data Deficiency:**

- A. Many species lack adequate scientific data.

II. **Habitat Loss:**

- A. Urbanisation and deforestation impacting roosting sites.

III. **Human Conflict:**

- A. Misconceptions leading to persecution.

IV. **Climate Change Impact:**

- A. Altering habitats and food availability.

## KEY ISSUES

I. **Conservation Gap:**

- A. Limited policy focus on bats.

II. **Research Deficit:**

- A. Inadequate monitoring and documentation.

III. **Public Perception:**

- A. Negative image linked to disease myths.

IV. **Ecosystem Imbalance:**

- A. Decline affects agriculture and biodiversity.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Biodiversity Conservation:** Protects an essential group of mammals.
- **Agricultural Benefits:** Natural pest control reduces pesticide use.
- **Ecosystem Health:** Maintains ecological balance.
- **Policy Attention:** Highlights need for targeted conservation strategies.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Bats:** Only flying mammals.
- **Echolocation:** Navigation using sound waves.
- **Pollination:** Transfer of pollen aiding plant reproduction.
- **Seed Dispersal:** Spreading seeds across regions.
- **Roosting Sites:** Places where bats rest or breed.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding bats:*

1. They are mammals capable of flight.
  2. They play a role in pollination and pest control.
  3. They are harmful to ecosystems.
- Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*"Biodiversity conservation requires*



*attention to lesser-known species.”*  
Discuss with reference to bats and their ecological importance.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the ecological importance of bats and the challenges in their conservation in India.
- Discuss the significance of the “State of India’s Bats (2024–25)” report. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding bats:

1. They are the only mammals capable of sustained flight.
2. They contribute to pollination and pest control.
3. They have no ecological significance.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

### Options:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer: A**

## 7.GOVERNMENT NOTIFIES TWO KEY INSTITUTIONS AS REPOSITORIES UNDER BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY ACT, 2002

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The Ministry of Environment Forest and Climate Change has notified two key institutions as **national repositories under the Biological Diversity Act 2002** to strengthen conservation and documentation of biological resources.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Biological Diversity Act, 2002:**
  - A. Enacted to conserve biodiversity, ensure sustainable use, and regulate access.
- II. **National Repositories:**
  - A. Institutions designated to store biological materials and data.
- III. **Regulatory Framework:**
  - A. Managed by the National Biodiversity Authority.

### KEY FEATURES

- I. **Designation of Institutions:**
  - A. Recognised as official repositories for biological resources.
- II. **Data Preservation:**
  - A. Storage of specimens, genetic material, and related information.
- III. **Research Facilitation:**



A. Supports scientific study and innovation.

IV. **Access Regulation:**

A. Ensures compliance with biodiversity laws.

## OBJECTIVES

- Strengthen **biodiversity conservation efforts**.
- Promote **scientific research and documentation**.
- Ensure **regulated access to biological resources**.
- Support **policy-making and environmental management**.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Conservation Support:** Protects biological resources systematically.
- **Scientific Advancement:** Enhances research infrastructure.
- **Legal Compliance:** Strengthens implementation of biodiversity laws.
- **Global Commitments:** Aligns with international biodiversity frameworks.

## CHALLENGES

- **Capacity Constraints:** Infrastructure and funding needs.
- **Data Management:** Handling large volumes of biodiversity data.
- **Coordination Issues:** Among institutions and agencies.
- **Access and Benefit Sharing:** Ensuring fair use of resources.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Biological Diversity Act, 2002:** Law for biodiversity conservation.
- **NBA:** National Biodiversity Authority.
- **Repositories:** Institutions storing biological materials.
- **Access and Benefit Sharing (ABS):** Fair sharing of benefits.
- **Biodiversity:** Variety of life forms.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding biodiversity governance:*

1. The Biological Diversity Act aims to conserve biodiversity.
2. National repositories store biological resources.
3. Biodiversity has no role in ecological balance.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*"Effective biodiversity conservation requires strong institutional mechanisms."*

Discuss in the context of India's biodiversity governance framework.



## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE

### QUESTION

- Examine the role of national repositories under the Biological Diversity Act, 2002.
- How do they contribute to biodiversity conservation and research in India? (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC

### MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding national repositories:*

1. They store biological resources and related data.
2. They support biodiversity research.
3. They are unrelated to the Biological Diversity Act.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer: A**



Subject

# *Species in News*



# 1. Black Panthers: The Elusive Melanistic Leopards in India's Forests



## Taxonomy & Identity

- I. **Common Name:** Black Panther (melanistic Leopard)
- II. **Scientific Name:** *Panthera pardus* (same species as leopard)
- III. **Family/Order:** Felidae | Carnivora
- IV. **Key Identification Features:**
  - A. Not a separate species → **colour variation (melanism)** in leopards
  - B. Dark black coat, but faint rosette patterns visible in sunlight
  - C. Highly stealthy and nocturnal

## IUCN & Legal Status (“Holy Trinity”)

- **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable (for leopard species)
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I
- **CITES:** Appendix I

## Geographic Range

- I. **Global Distribution:**
  - A. Sub-Saharan Africa
  - B. South and Southeast Asia
- II. **India-specific Range:**
  - A. Widespread in forested regions of India
  - B. Notable sightings in:
    1. Western Ghats
    2. Kaziranga National Park
    3. Nagarhole National Park
  - C. Often reported in **dense evergreen and tropical forests**

## Eco-Behavioral Traits

- I. **Habitat Type:** Forests, scrublands, rocky terrains
- II. **Activity Pattern:** Nocturnal (highly secretive)
- III. **Diet:** Carnivorous (deer, wild boar, monkeys, small mammals)
- IV. **Special Traits:**
  - A. Excellent climber → often drags prey onto trees
  - B. Melanism provides **camouflage advantage in dense forests**
  - C. Solitary and highly territorial



- D. Same species as leopard → no taxonomic separation

## Threat Matrix

- I. **Major Threats:**
  - A. Habitat Fragmentation
  - B. Human-Wildlife Conflict (livestock predation)
  - C. Poaching (skin and body parts trade)
  - D. Decline in prey base
  - E. Roadkill incidents in forest corridors

## Prelims Booster (Exam-Oriented Facts)

- "Black Panther" = **melanistic leopard, not a separate species**
- Melanism is **genetically driven increase in dark pigmentation**
- More commonly seen in **Western Ghats** due to dense forest cover
- Even in melanistic form, **rosette patterns are visible under light**
- Leopard is one of the most **adaptable big cats in India**

## 2. Endangered Tibetan Antelope: The High-Altitude Survivor of the Changthang Plateau



## Taxonomy & Identity

- I. **Common Name:** Tibetan Antelope (Chiru)
- II. **Scientific Name:** *Pantholops hodgsonii*
- III. **Family/Order:** Bovidae | Artiodactyla
- IV. **Key Identification Features:**
  - A. Slender antelope adapted to extreme cold
  - B. Males have long, thin, backward-curving horns
  - C. Dense underfur ("shahtoosh wool") highly prized

## IUCN & Legal Status ("Holy Trinity")



- **IUCN Red List:** Near Threatened
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I
- **CITES:** Appendix I

- B. Habitat degradation (roads, mining, infrastructure)
- C. Climate change affecting alpine grasslands
- D. Disturbance from livestock grazing competition

## Geographic Range

- I. **Global Distribution:**
  - A. Endemic to Tibetan Plateau region
- II. **India-specific Range:**
  - A. Found in extreme northern high-altitude regions:
    1. Hemis National Park
    2. Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary
  - B. Prefers **cold desert ecosystems above 4,000 m altitude**

## Prelims Booster (Exam-Oriented Facts)

- Also called "**Chiru**"
- Shahtoosh shawl trade banned globally under **CITES Appendix I**
- Strongly associated with **high-altitude cold desert ecosystem conservation**
- Conservation success due to strict protection in China and India
- India's key populations are in **Changthang Wildlife Sanctuary**

## Eco-Behavioral Traits

- I. **Habitat Type:** Alpine meadows, cold deserts
- II. **Activity Pattern:** Diurnal (active in daylight at high altitudes)
- III. **Diet:** Grasses, herbs, sedges
- IV. **Special Traits:**
  - A. Extreme altitude adaptation (low oxygen survival)
  - B. Seasonal long-distance migration for calving
  - C. Source of ultra-fine wool (**shahtoosh**)
  - D. One of the few large mammals adapted to Tibetan Plateau

## Threat Matrix

- I. **Major Threats:**
  - A. Poaching for shahtoosh wool



# 3.BSF Plans Crocodile and Snake 'Patrols' at Border: Nature as a Security Ally



- A. Cobra (*Naja naja*)
- B. Russell's Viper (*Daboia russelii*)
- II. **Family/Order:** Elapidae / Viperidae | Squamata

## IUCN & Legal Status ("Holy Trinity")

### Mugger Crocodile

- **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I
- **CITES:** Appendix I

### Snakes (Cobra & Viper)

- **IUCN Red List:** Least Concern (varies by species)
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule II (Cobra, Viper)
- **CITES:** Not generally listed

## Taxonomy & Identity

### Crocodiles (Likely Mugger Crocodile)

- I. **Common Name:** Mugger Crocodile
- II. **Scientific Name:** *Crocodylus palustris*
- III. **Family/Order:** Crocodylidae | Crocodylia
- IV. **Key Identification Features:**
  - A. Broad snout (adapted for varied prey)
  - B. Freshwater crocodile found in rivers, lakes, reservoirs

### Snakes (Likely Venomous Species in Border Ecosystems)

- I. Commonly include:

## Geographic Range

### Mugger Crocodile

- I. **India-specific Range:**
  - A. Rivers, lakes, reservoirs across India
  - B. Key habitats:
    - 1. Chambal River Sanctuary
    - 2. Gir National Park

### Snakes

- I. Widespread across India
- II. Common in:
  - A. Agricultural fields
  - B. Grasslands



- C. Forest edges
- D. Border ecosystems (wetlands, riverbanks, scrublands)

- Pollution of river ecosystems affecting crocodiles
- Infrastructure development near natural habitats
- Decline in prey base

## Eco-Behavioral Traits

### Crocodile (Mugger)

- I. **Habitat Type:** Freshwater rivers, marshes, reservoirs
- II. **Activity Pattern:** Nocturnal + basking in daytime
- III. **Diet:** Fish, birds, mammals
- IV. **Special Traits:**
  - A. Apex predator in aquatic ecosystems
  - B. Territorial; strong site fidelity

### Snakes (General)

- I. **Habitat Type:** Terrestrial and semi-aquatic zones
- II. **Activity Pattern:** Mostly nocturnal (varies by species)
- III. **Diet:** Rodents, amphibians, small reptiles
- IV. **Special Traits:**
  - A. Natural **rodent population control agents**
  - B. Venom used for defense and hunting

## Threat Matrix

### Common Threats

- Habitat encroachment along border wetlands and forests
- Human-wildlife conflict (fear-driven killing of snakes)

## Prelims Booster

### (Exam-Oriented Facts)

- Border Security Force exploring **eco-patrolling model using native wildlife awareness zones**
- Crocodiles act as **top aquatic predators** → **indicator of wetland health**
- Snakes are crucial for **agricultural pest control (rodents)**
- India has successful crocodile conservation in **Chambal River Sanctuary**
- Idea reflects **“eco-security integration” in border management**

## Analytical Note (GS Value Addition)

This initiative highlights an emerging concept:

### “Ecosystem-based border management”

- Uses natural deterrents and habitat awareness
- Reduces human intrusion in sensitive ecosystems
- Aligns with biodiversity conservation + security co-management



# 4. Altered Mosquitoes May Transform Malaria Control



## Taxonomy & Identity

- I. **Common Name:** Malaria Mosquito
- II. **Scientific Name:** *Anopheles* spp. (notably *Anopheles gambiae*, *Anopheles stephensi*)
- III. **Family/Order:** Culicidae | Diptera
- IV. **Key Identification Features:**
  - A. Rests at an angle (body inclined relative to surface)
  - B. Female has long proboscis for blood feeding

## IUCN & Legal Status (“Holy Trinity”)

- **IUCN Red List:** Not Evaluated (most species)
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Not Listed
- **CITES:** Not Listed

## Geographic Range

- I. **Global Distribution:**
  - A. Tropical and subtropical regions worldwide
- II. **India-specific Range:**
  - A. Widespread across India
  - B. Urban vector: *Anopheles stephensi* (notably in cities)
  - C. Breeding sites: stagnant freshwater (containers, tanks, puddles)

## Eco-Behavioral Traits

- I. **Habitat Type:** Freshwater breeding habitats
- II. **Activity Pattern:** Nocturnal (primary malaria vector bites at night)
- III. **Diet:**
  - A. Females: Blood meals (for egg development)
  - B. Males: Nectar
- IV. **Special Traits:**
  - A. Vector of **malaria parasite (*Plasmodium*)**
  - B. Highly adaptive to urban and peri-urban environments
  - C. Short reproductive cycle → rapid population turnover

## Threat Matrix (from human/public health perspective)

- I. **Major Concerns:**
  - A. Malaria Transmission (major vector-borne disease)



- B. Insecticide Resistance
- C. Urbanization increasing breeding habitats
- D. Climate Change expanding vector range

## Prelims Booster (Exam-Oriented Facts)

- “Altered mosquitoes” refers to **genetic modification / gene-drive technology**
- Goal: reduce mosquito population or **block malaria transmission**
- *Anopheles* → malaria vector (distinct from *Aedes* → dengue)
- Control methods evolving from **chemical** → **biological** → **genetic approaches**
- Raises concerns on **bioethics, ecological balance, and unintended consequences**

## Analytical Note (GS III Linkage)

- I. Example of **biotechnology in public health**
- II. Linked to **vector ecology + climate change**
- III. Raises governance issues:
  - A. Biosafety regulation
  - B. Transboundary ecological impact
  - C. Ethical concerns in gene editing

# 5.Emperor Penguin & Antarctic Fur Seal: Climate Change Drives IUCN Uplisting



## Taxonomy & Identity

### Emperor Penguin

- I. **Common Name:** Emperor Penguin
- II. **Scientific Name:** *Aptenodytes forsteri*
- III. **Family/Order:** Spheniscidae | Sphenisciformes
- IV. **Key Identification Features:**
  - A. Largest penguin species
  - B. Black head with distinctive yellow ear patches

### Antarctic Fur Seal



- I. **Common Name:** Antarctic Fur Seal
- II. **Scientific Name:** *Arctocephalus gazella*
- III. **Family/Order:** Otariidae | Carnivora
- IV. **Key Identification Features:**
  - A. Thick fur coat (unlike true seals)
  - B. External ear flaps; agile on land

## IUCN & Legal Status (“Holy Trinity”)

### Emperor Penguin

- **IUCN Red List:** Endangered (*recent uplisting due to climate change*)
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Not Applicable (non-Indian species)
- **CITES:** Appendix II

### Antarctic Fur Seal

- **IUCN Red List:** Endangered (*as per latest assessment in news context*)
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Not Applicable
- **CITES:** Appendix II

## Geographic Range

- I. **Global Distribution:**
  - A. Restricted to **Antarctic region**

### Emperor Penguin

- Breeds on **sea ice around Antarctica**
- Strongly dependent on stable ice platforms

### Antarctic Fur Seal

- I. Found across **sub-Antarctic islands and Southern Ocean**
- II. Breeding colonies on islands like:
  - A. South Georgia Island

## Eco-Behavioral Traits

### Emperor Penguin

- I. **Habitat Type:** Sea ice, polar marine ecosystem
- II. **Activity Pattern:** Diurnal
- III. **Diet:** Fish, krill, squid
- IV. **Special Traits:**
  - A. Unique **male incubation behavior** (balances egg on feet)
  - B. Extreme cold adaptation (-50°C survival)
  - C. Highly dependent on **sea ice stability**

### Antarctic Fur Seal

- I. **Habitat Type:** Marine + coastal breeding grounds
- II. **Activity Pattern:** Diurnal/nocturnal (marine foraging)
- III. **Diet:** Krill, fish
- IV. **Special Traits:**
  - A. Thick insulating fur → historically hunted heavily
  - B. Strong swimmer; long-distance foraging

## Threat Matrix

- I. **Major Threats (Common):**
  - A. Climate Change → **melting sea ice & warming oceans**



- B. Decline in krill populations (base of Antarctic food web)
- C. Ocean acidification
- II. **Species-specific:**
  - A. Emperor Penguin → Loss of breeding ice platforms
  - B. Fur Seal → Changing prey distribution & warming waters

## Prelims Booster (Exam-Oriented Facts)

- Both species linked to **Antarctic ecosystem health**
- Emperor Penguin = **ice-dependent species** → **climate indicator**
- Antarctic Fur Seal once nearly hunted to extinction → conservation recovery story now threatened again
- Krill forms **key trophic base** → impacts entire food chain
- Uplisting highlights **direct biodiversity impacts of climate change**

## Analytical Note (GS III Linkage)

- I. Strong example of **climate change** → **species vulnerability escalation**
- II. Highlights fragility of **polar ecosystems**
- III. Relevant for:
  - A. Biodiversity conservation
  - B. Climate governance (global commons)
  - C. Ocean ecosystem stability

# 6. Bengal Florican Populations Are Declining: Grassland Crisis Deepens



## Taxonomy & Identity

- I. **Common Name:** Bengal Florican
- II. **Scientific Name:** *Houbaropsis bengalensis*
- III. **Family/Order:** Otididae | Otidiformes
- IV. **Key Identification Features:**
  - A. Small bustard species with striking breeding display
  - B. Males have black body with white wing patches during display season
  - C. Ground-dwelling bird of open grasslands



## IUCN & Legal Status (“Holy Trinity”)

- **IUCN Red List:** Critically Endangered
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Schedule I
- **CITES:** Appendix I

## Geographic Range

- I. **Global Distribution:**
  - A. Fragmented populations in South and Southeast Asia
- II. **India-specific Range:**
  - A. Stronghold in:
    1. Dudhwa National Park
    2. Manas National Park
  - B. Found in **tall grassland ecosystems of the Terai and Brahmaputra floodplains**

## Eco-Behavioral Traits

- I. **Habitat Type:** Tall wet grasslands (floodplain ecosystems)
- II. **Activity Pattern:** Diurnal
- III. **Diet:** Omnivorous (insects, small reptiles, seeds)
- IV. **Special Traits:**
  - A. Strong dependence on **undisturbed grassland patches**
  - B. Males perform elaborate **lekking display** (breeding ritual)
  - C. Ground-nesting → highly vulnerable to disturbance

## Threat Matrix

- I. **Major Threats:**
  - A. Grassland Conversion (agriculture, plantations, infrastructure)
  - B. Floodplain modification and embankments
  - C. Overgrazing by livestock
  - D. Nest destruction due to human activity
  - E. Fragmentation of breeding habitats

## Prelims Booster (Exam-Oriented Facts)

- One of the **world’s most endangered bustard species**
- Indicator of **healthy tall wet grassland ecosystems**
- Requires **undisturbed floodplain grasslands for breeding**
- Found mainly in **Dudhwa National Park and Manas National Park**
- Grasslands often misclassified as “wastelands” → key policy issue

## Analytical Note (GS III Linkage)

- I. Highlights **neglect of grassland ecosystems in conservation policy**
- II. Conservation bias toward forests → grasslands underprotected
- III. Requires integration of:
  - A. Biodiversity conservation
  - B. Agricultural policy



# 7. Southern Elephant Seal: IUCN Uplists Species from Least Concern to Vulnerable



## Taxonomy & Identity

- I. **Common Name:** Southern Elephant Seal
- II. **Scientific Name:** *Mirounga leonina*
- III. **Family/Order:** Phocidae | Carnivora
- IV. **Key Identification Features:**
  - A. Largest seal species in the world
  - B. Males possess an inflatable "trunk-like" proboscis (elephant-like nose)
  - C. Extreme sexual dimorphism (males much larger than females)

## IUCN & Legal Status ("Holy Trinity")

- **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable (*recent uplisting from Least Concern*)
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Not Applicable (non-Indian species)
- **CITES:** Appendix II

## Geographic Range

- I. **Global Distribution:**
  - A. Sub-Antarctic and Antarctic regions
- II. **Key Locations:**
  - A. South Georgia
  - B. Falkland Islands
  - C. Kerguelen Islands
  - D. Macquarie Island
- III. **Habitat Type:** Remote oceanic islands and surrounding Southern Ocean

## Eco-Behavioral Traits

- I. **Habitat Type:** Cold marine waters + coastal breeding beaches
- II. **Activity Pattern:** Deep-diving marine mammal
- III. **Diet:** Squid, fish, deep-sea prey
- IV. **Special Traits:**
  - A. Record deep diver among seals (can exceed 1,500 m depth)
  - B. Long-duration dives (up to 2 hours)
  - C. Males engage in intense territorial battles during breeding season
  - D. Spends majority of life at sea



## Threat Matrix

- B. Global climate governance
- C. Marine biodiversity monitoring

### I. Major Threats:

- A. Climate Change (warming oceans, shifting prey distribution)
- B. Changes in sea ice and ocean productivity
- C. Marine ecosystem disruption (krill and fish availability)
- D. Historical hunting (now largely recovered but still impacts genetics)

## Prelims Booster (Exam-Oriented Facts)

- Largest pinniped species globally
- Named "elephant seal" due to **male's trunk-like snout**
- Key indicator of **Southern Ocean ecosystem health**
- Uplisting reflects growing concern over **climate-driven marine food web changes**
- Not found in Indian waters but important for **global biodiversity governance (IUCN relevance)**

## Analytical Note (GS III Linkage)

- I. Highlights **impact of climate change on marine megafauna**
- II. Reflects degradation of **Southern Ocean ecosystem stability**
- III. Relevant to:
  - A. Ocean conservation policies

## 8. Morchella Mushroom: The "Gucchi" of Himalayan Forests and Its Rising Ecological & Economic Value



## Taxonomy & Identity

- I. **Common Name:** Morel Mushroom / Guchi
- II. **Scientific Name:** *Morchella esculenta* (and related *Morchella* spp.)



- III. **Family/Order:** Morchellaceae | Pezizales
- IV. **Key Identification Features:**
  - A. Honeycomb-like cap with deep pits and ridges
  - B. Hollow inside when cut vertically
  - C. Highly prized edible wild fungus

- A. Forms symbiotic associations with forest trees (mycorrhizal links suspected in some species)
- B. Highly sensitive to soil moisture and temperature
- C. Naturally regenerates in post-snowmelt conditions

## IUCN & Legal Status (“Holy Trinity”)

- **IUCN Red List:** Not Evaluated (most species)
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Not listed
- **CITES:** Not listed

## Geographic Range

- I. **Global Distribution:**
  - A. Temperate regions of Europe, North America, and Asia
- II. **India-specific Range:**
  - A. Himalayan belt: Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand
  - B. Key landscapes: alpine forests, coniferous zones
  - C. Often found after snowmelt in forest litter

## Eco-Behavioral Traits

- I. **Habitat Type:** Temperate coniferous forests, humus-rich soil
- II. **Activity Pattern:** Seasonal (appears in spring/early summer)
- III. **Diet:** Saprophytic (decomposes organic matter)
- IV. **Special Traits:**

## Threat Matrix

- I. **Major Threats:**
  - A. Overharvesting due to high market value
  - B. Habitat degradation (deforestation, forest fires)
  - C. Climate Change altering snowmelt patterns
  - D. Lack of sustainable cultivation knowledge at scale
  - E. Illegal trade and middlemen exploitation of collectors

## Prelims Booster (Exam-Oriented Facts)

- Locally known as “**Gucchi**” in Himalayan regions
- One of the **world’s most expensive wild mushrooms**
- Found abundantly in **Himalayan region forests after snowmelt**
- Major source of **non-timber forest income for tribal communities**
- Cannot be easily cultivated commercially → increases conservation pressure



## Analytical Note (GS III Linkage)

- I. Example of **non-timber forest product (NTFP)** with high economic value
- II. Links biodiversity with **rural livelihoods in Himalayan states**
- III. Raises issues of:
  - A. Sustainable harvesting
  - B. Forest resource governance
  - C. Climate sensitivity of alpine ecosystems

- II. **Scientific Name:** *Hippopotamus amphibius*
- III. **Family/Order:** Hippopotamidae | Artiodactyla
- IV. **Key Identification Features:**
  - A. Large semi-aquatic mammal with barrel-shaped body
  - B. Highly aggressive; spends most time submerged in water
  - C. Herbivorous but territorial

# 9.Colombia's Invasive Hippopotamus Crisis: A 2026 Control Plan

## IUCN & Legal Status ("Holy Trinity")

- **IUCN Red List:** Vulnerable
- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Not applicable (non-native to India)
- **CITES:** Appendix II

## Geographic Range

### Native Range

- Sub-Saharan Africa (rivers, lakes, wetlands)

### Invasive Range (News Context)

- I. **Colombia** (notably Magdalena River basin)
- II. Origin: Escaped/abandoned animals from private estate of Pablo Escobar in the 1980s
- III. Current Issue:
  - A. Rapid population expansion without natural predators
  - B. Spread into river systems and wetlands



## Taxonomy & Identity

- I. **Common Name:** Hippopotamus



## Eco-Behavioral Traits

- I. **Habitat Type:** Rivers, lakes, freshwater wetlands
- II. **Activity Pattern:** Nocturnal foraging; aquatic daytime resting
- III. **Diet:** Herbivore (grasses, aquatic plants)
- IV. **Special Traits:**
  - A. Highly territorial in water bodies
  - B. Can significantly alter aquatic ecosystems through grazing and waste deposition
  - C. Despite size, can run fast on land

- Colombia's hippos are a **classic case of invasive megafauna species**
- Origin traced to **private exotic animal imports (Pablo Escobar estate)**
- Now forming a **self-sustaining population outside Africa**
- Management strategies include **sterilization, relocation, and controlled culling debates**
- Demonstrates how **non-native species can become long-term ecological threats**

## Threat Matrix

### In Native Range (Africa)

- Habitat loss
- Human-wildlife conflict
- Poaching for meat and ivory-like teeth

### In Colombia (Invasive Context)

- **Ecosystem disruption of river systems**
- Water quality degradation (nutrient loading)
- Displacement of native species
- Human safety risks (aggressive encounters)
- Lack of natural predators → uncontrolled population growth

## Prelims Booster

### (Exam-Oriented Facts)

## Analytical Note (GS III Linkage)

- I. Example of **invasive species management challenge in biodiversity governance**
- II. Raises ethical and ecological questions:
  - A. Culling vs conservation ethics
  - B. Ecosystem restoration vs animal rights
- III. Relevant to global frameworks on **invasive alien species (CBD context)**

## 10. New Gecko Species (*Cyrtodactylus raimonaensis*) Discovered Near



# Raimona National Park



- **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** Likely Schedule IV (genus-level common reptiles; species-specific listing pending)
- **CITES:** Not Listed

## Geographic Range

- I. **Known Distribution:**
  - A. Near **Raimona National Park**
  - B. Part of **Bodoland region in Assam**
- II. **Habitat Type:**
  - A. Tropical evergreen and semi-evergreen forests
  - B. Rocky outcrops and forest-floor microhabitats

## Taxonomy & Identity

- I. **Common Name:** Bent-toed Gecko (new species)
- II. **Scientific Name:** *Cyrtodactylus raimonaensis*
- III. **Family/Order:** Gekkonidae | Squamata
- IV. **Key Identification Features:**
  - A. Slender nocturnal lizard with curved (“bent”) toes
  - B. Adapted for climbing rocks and forest surfaces
  - C. Cryptic coloration aiding camouflage in leaf litter and bark

## Eco-Behavioral Traits

- I. **Habitat Type:** Moist forest ecosystems with rocky substrates
- II. **Activity Pattern:** Nocturnal
- III. **Diet:** Insectivorous (small insects and arthropods)
- IV. **Special Traits:**
  - A. Highly cryptic → often discovered only through targeted herpetofaunal surveys
  - B. Micro-endemic species → restricted to small geographic range
  - C. Plays role in **insect population control** in forest ecosystems

## IUCN & Legal Status (“Holy Trinity”)

- **IUCN Red List:** Not Evaluated (newly described species)

## Threat Matrix

- I. **Major Threats:**
  - A. Habitat fragmentation due to infrastructure expansion



- B. Forest degradation and logging pressure
  - C. Climate change altering microhabitat humidity
  - D. Limited range → high vulnerability to localized disturbances
- C. Investment in taxonomic research and field biology

## Prelims Booster (Exam-Oriented Facts)

- Belongs to **Cyrtodactylus** genus → **one of the most species-rich gecko groups in Asia**
- Discovery highlights **high herpetofaunal diversity in Northeast India**
- Raimona National Park is part of the **Bodoland Territorial Region biodiversity landscape**
- New species discoveries indicate **underexplored biodiversity hotspots in India**
- Reptiles like geckos are key **indicator species for forest micro-ecosystem health**

## Analytical Note (GS III Linkage)

- I. Reinforces importance of **biodiversity documentation in Northeast India (global biodiversity hotspot)**
- II. Supports arguments for:
  - A. Expansion of protected area networks
  - B. Microhabitat conservation (not just flagship species protection)



Subject

# *Science & Tech*



## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **SAARC:** South Asian regional organisation.
- **Currency Swap:** Exchange of currencies to provide liquidity support.
- **Forex Reserves:** Foreign exchange assets held by a country.
- **Balance of Payments:** Record of economic transactions with the world.
- **Liquidity Support:** Short-term financial assistance.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**  
*Consider the following statements regarding currency swap arrangements:*
  1. They provide foreign exchange liquidity support.
  2. They are long-term loans with fixed interest rates.
  3. They can help stabilise exchange rates.*Which of the statements given above is/are correct?*  
**Answer:** 1 and 3 only.
- **Mains PYQ:**  
*"India's regional financial assistance strengthens both economic stability and diplomatic influence."*  
Discuss in the context of South Asia.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE

### QUESTION

- Examine the significance of India's financial support to Maldives under the SAARC Currency Swap Framework.
- How does it reflect India's regional economic diplomacy? (150 words)

### PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding the SAARC Currency Swap Framework:*

1. It provides short-term liquidity support to member countries.
2. It is limited to trade financing only.
3. India plays a major role in the mechanism.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

#### **Options:**

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A



Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2, and 3

**Answer:** A

### 3. STEEL PRICE INCREASE HITS MSMEs: COST PRESSURES MOUNT

#### WHY IN NEWS?

- Rising steel prices are putting pressure on **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)**, impacting their **cost structures, profitability, and competitiveness** in sectors like construction, manufacturing, and engineering goods.

#### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Steel as Core Input:**
  - A. Widely used in infrastructure, automobiles, machinery, and MSME manufacturing.
- II. **Price Drivers:**
  - A. Global demand-supply imbalance, raw material costs (iron ore, coking coal), and export trends.
- III. **MSME Sector:**
  - A. Contributes ~30% to India's GDP and employs millions.
- IV. **Policy Context:**

- A. The government focuses on "Make in India" and manufacturing growth.

#### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Cost Escalation:** Higher steel prices increase production costs for MSMEs.
- **Low Pricing Power:** MSMEs struggle to pass on costs to consumers.
- **Competitiveness Impact:** Affects exports and domestic market share.
- **Working Capital Stress:** Higher input costs increase financial burden.
- **Sectoral Impact:** Construction, auto components, and engineering goods most affected.

#### PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **MSME Definition:** Based on investment and turnover criteria.
- **Steel Industry:** Core sector under Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
- **Input Cost Inflation:** Rise in cost of raw materials.
- **Value Chain:** Raw material → manufacturing → final goods.
- **Economic Role:** MSMEs are the backbone of employment and exports.

#### PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

Consider the following statements regarding MSMEs:

  1. They contribute significantly to GDP and employment.



## 1.PM: SANAND–SILICON VALLEY SEMICONDUCTOR RISE

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The Prime Minister highlighted India's ambition to transform Sanand into a semiconductor manufacturing hub comparable to Silicon Valley, signalling a major push in electronics and chip production.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Semiconductor Importance:**
  - A. Critical for electronics, automobiles, telecom, defense, and AI.
- II. **Global Scenario:**
  - A. Supply chain disruptions exposed dependence on a few countries.
- III. **India's Policy Push:**
  - A. Semiconductor Mission and incentives for chip manufacturing.
- IV. **Sanand's Advantage:**
  - A. Existing industrial ecosystem, connectivity, and policy support.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Manufacturing Push:** Establishment of semiconductor fabs and assembly units.

- **Investment Attraction:** Global companies being encouraged to set up facilities.
- **Job Creation:** High-skilled employment opportunities.
- **Strategic Autonomy:** Reduces dependence on imports.
- **Technology Development:** Boost to innovation and R&D ecosystem.

### CHALLENGES

- **High Capital Cost:** Semiconductor fabs require massive investment.
- **Technology Gap:** Dependence on foreign expertise.
- **Supply Chain Needs:** Raw materials, water, and energy requirements.
- **Global Competition:** Competing with established hubs like Taiwan and the US.

### PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Semiconductors:** Materials used in electronic circuits.
- **Fab:** Fabrication plant for chips.
- **India Semiconductor Mission:** Initiative to promote chip manufacturing.
- **PLI Scheme:** Incentives for electronics manufacturing.
- **Sanand:** Emerging industrial hub in Gujarat.



## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

Consider the following statements regarding semiconductors:

1. They are essential for modern electronics.
2. Semiconductor manufacturing requires high investment.
3. India is currently a global leader in chip fabrication.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*"Self-reliance in semiconductor manufacturing is crucial for economic and strategic security."*

Discuss the opportunities and challenges for India in becoming a semiconductor hub.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Analyse India's push to develop semiconductor manufacturing hubs like Sanand.
- Discuss its significance for economic growth and strategic autonomy. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding semiconductor manufacturing:

1. It is capital-intensive.
2. It is important for electronics and the digital economy.
3. India currently dominates global chip fabrication.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 2.EARTH'S ORBITS CROWDED DUE TO POOR GOVERNANCE

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Concerns are rising globally over increasing congestion in Earth's orbital space due to weak regulatory mechanisms, highlighting gaps in governance under frameworks like the Outer Space Treaty.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Orbital Space:**
  - A. Regions around Earth where satellites operate (LEO, MEO, GEO).
- II. **Space Debris:**
  - A. Defunct satellites, fragments from collisions, and rocket parts.
- III. **Governance Framework:**



- A. Primarily guided by international treaties like the Outer Space Treaty.

#### IV. **Commercial Expansion:**

- A. Private players increasing satellite launches (mega-constellations).

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Orbital Congestion:** Increased number of satellites in low Earth orbit (LEO).
- **Collision Risk:** Higher probability of accidents (Kessler Syndrome risk).
- **Space Debris Growth:** Thousands of inactive objects in orbit.
- **Governance Gap:** Lack of enforceable global regulations.
- **Security Concerns:** Anti-satellite tests and militarisation.

## KEY ISSUES

- **Kessler Syndrome:** Chain reaction of collisions creating more debris.
- **Lack of Accountability:** No clear liability for debris generation.
- **Data Sharing:** Limited coordination among nations and companies.
- **Sustainability:** Threat to long-term usability of space.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **LEO:** Low Earth Orbit (~160–2000 km).
- **GEO:** Geostationary Orbit (~36,000 km).
- **Space Debris:** Non-functional objects in orbit.
- **Outer Space Treaty (1967):** Governs peaceful use of space.

- **ISRO:** India's space agency.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

Consider the following statements regarding space governance:

1. Outer Space Treaty governs activities in space.
2. Space debris poses risks to satellites.
3. There are strict global enforcement mechanisms for space traffic.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*"The increasing commercialization of space requires robust governance frameworks."*

Discuss the challenges posed by space debris and suggest measures for sustainable space governance.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the issue of orbital congestion and space debris.
- Discuss the limitations of existing governance frameworks and suggest measures for sustainable use of outer space. (150 words)



## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC

### MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding space debris:

1. It includes defunct satellites and fragments.
2. It increases the risk of collisions in orbit.
3. It is effectively regulated by strict global enforcement laws.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

#### Options:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A

### 3. ENTANGLEMENT: "SPOOKY ACTION AT A DISTANCE"

#### WHY IN NEWS?

- Quantum entanglement continues to gain attention with advances in quantum technologies like computing and secure communication, a phenomenon famously described by Albert Einstein as "spooky action at a distance."

#### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

##### I. Quantum Mechanics:

A. Branch of physics dealing with subatomic particles.

##### II. Entanglement Concept:

A. When particles interact, they can become correlated in ways not explained by classical laws.

##### III. Einstein's Concern:

A. He questioned its non-local nature, calling it "spooky action."

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Non-Locality:** Instant correlation across distances.
- **Measurement Effect:** Observing one particle determines the state of the other.
- **No Faster-than-Light Communication:** Does not violate relativity in practical terms.
- **Experimental Proof:** Verified through multiple experiments (Bell's theorem).
- **Technological Applications:** Foundation of emerging quantum technologies.

### APPLICATIONS

- **Quantum Computing:** Faster problem-solving capabilities.
- **Quantum Cryptography:** Ultra-secure communication systems.
- **Quantum Teleportation:** Transfer of quantum information.

### PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Quantum Mechanics:** Study of particles at atomic/subatomic level.



- **Entanglement:** Linked quantum states of particles.
- **Superposition:** Particles exist in multiple states simultaneously.
- **Bell's Theorem:** Tests entanglement experimentally.
- **Quantum Communication:** Uses quantum states for data transfer.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**  
*Consider the following statements regarding quantum physics:*
  1. Entanglement links particles irrespective of distance.
  2. It allows faster-than-light communication.
  3. It is a concept in quantum mechanics.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?  
**Answer:** 1 and 3 only.
- **Mains PYQ:**  
*"Emerging technologies are based on fundamental scientific discoveries."*  
Discuss the concept of quantum entanglement and its applications.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Explain the concept of quantum entanglement.
- Discuss its significance in emerging technologies such as quantum computing and secure communication. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding quantum entanglement:

1. It links particles such that their states are correlated.
2. It enables practical faster-than-light communication.
3. It is a concept in quantum mechanics.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 4.NASA FUELS ROCKET FOR LUNAR TRIP AFTER 50 YEARS

### WHY IN NEWS?

- NASA has fuelled its heavy-lift rocket for a crewed lunar mission under the Artemis Program, marking a major milestone in returning humans to the Moon after more than five decades since the Apollo Program.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Apollo Era:**



- A. Last human Moon landing in 1972.
- II. **Artemis Program:**
  - A. Designed to return astronauts to the Moon and beyond.
- III. **Recent Progress:**
  - A. Successful uncrewed missions and system testing.

- **Orion:** Crew spacecraft.
- **Apollo 11:** First Moon landing (1969).
- **Lunar Gateway:** Planned space station around the Moon.

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Rocket System:** Use of Space Launch System (SLS).
- **Crew Vehicle:** Orion spacecraft.
- **Mission Goal:** Lunar flyby (Artemis II) followed by landing (Artemis III).
- **Technological Leap:** Advanced propulsion, navigation, and safety systems.
- **Global Interest:** Participation of international partners.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Human Spaceflight Revival:** First crewed lunar mission in decades.
- **Scientific Research:** Study of lunar surface and resources.
- **Strategic Importance:** Space leadership and geopolitical influence.
- **Future Exploration:** Gateway to Mars missions.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Artemis Program:** NASA's Moon exploration initiative.
- **SLS:** Heavy-lift rocket for deep space missions.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding lunar missions:*

  1. Artemis missions aim to return humans to the Moon.
  2. SLS is used for deep space missions.
  3. Apollo missions were uncrewed.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.
- **Mains PYQ:**

*"Space exploration reflects technological advancement and strategic ambition."*

Discuss the significance of renewed lunar missions in the context of global space competition and cooperation.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Analyse the significance of NASA's Artemis program in reviving human lunar exploration.
- Discuss its implications for global space politics and future missions. (150 words)



## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC

### MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding NASA's Artemis program:

1. It aims to send humans back to the Moon.
2. It uses the Space Launch System rocket.
3. It has no relevance for future Mars missions.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

#### Options:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 5.BIRAC-BioNEST INCUBATION CENTRE AT CFTRI INAUGURATED

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The Union Minister for Science and Technology has inaugurated the **BIRAC-BioNEST Incubation Centre** at Central Food Technological Research Institute to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in biotechnology and food technology.

## BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **BIRAC:**
  - A. Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council supports biotech innovation.
- II. **BioNEST Programme:**
  - A. Network of incubators for nurturing startups in life sciences.
- III. **CFTRI:**
  - A. Premier food research institute under Council of Scientific and Industrial Research.

## KEY FEATURES

- I. **Startup Incubation:**
  - A. Supports early-stage biotech and food-tech startups.
- II. **Infrastructure Support:**
  - A. Labs, testing facilities, and research equipment.
- III. **Mentorship & Funding:**
  - A. Guidance from experts and financial assistance.
- IV. **Industry Linkages:**
  - A. Collaboration with academia and industry.

## OBJECTIVES

- Promote **innovation in biotechnology and food processing.**
- Support **startup ecosystem development.**
- Enhance **value addition in agriculture and food sectors.**



- Boost **India's bioeconomy and research capacity.**

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Startup Growth:** Encourages entrepreneurship in emerging sectors.
- **Technological Advancement:** Promotes research-driven innovation.
- **Economic Development:** Contributes to job creation and industrial growth.
- **Food Security:** Supports innovations in food processing and safety.

## CHALLENGES

- **Funding Constraints:** Sustained financial support needed.
- **Commercialisation Gaps:** Translating research into market products.
- **Skill Development:** Need for trained human resources.
- **Regulatory Hurdles:** Compliance in the biotech sector.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **BIRAC:** Promotes biotech innovation in India.
- **BioNEST:** Incubation support network for startups.
- **CFTRI:** Food research institute under CSIR.
- **Incubation Centre:** Facility supporting startups.
- **Bioeconomy:** Economy based on biological resources.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding startup incubation:*

1. Incubators provide infrastructure and mentorship.
2. They support early-stage enterprises.
3. They are limited to the IT sector only.

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

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*"Innovation and entrepreneurship are key drivers of economic growth."*

*Discuss the role of incubation centres in promoting startups in India.*

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the role of BIRAC-BioNEST incubation centres in promoting biotechnology innovation and entrepreneurship in India. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding BIRAC-BioNEST:*

1. It supports biotech startups.
2. It provides incubation facilities.
3. It is unrelated to innovation promotion.



Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 6. QUANTUM STATE CLONING HURDLE OVERCOME

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Recent advances in quantum research have demonstrated methods to partially overcome limitations imposed by the No-Cloning Theorem, opening new possibilities in quantum computing and communication.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Quantum Mechanics:**
  - A. Governs behavior of particles at atomic and subatomic levels.
- II. **No-Cloning Theorem:**
  - A. Fundamental principle preventing exact copying of quantum states.
- III. **Why Important:**
  - A. Ensures security in quantum communication systems.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Approximate Cloning:** Possible with limited accuracy.
- **Probabilistic Cloning:** Works under specific conditions.
- **No Violation:** The theorem still holds—perfect cloning remains impossible.
- **Experimental Progress:** Demonstrates improved control over quantum systems.
- **Technological Impact:** Enhances quantum information processing.

### SIGNIFICANCE

- **Quantum Computing:** Better manipulation of quantum information.
- **Quantum Cryptography:** Security implications—needs careful safeguards.
- **Research Advancement:** Deeper understanding of quantum laws.
- **Innovation Potential:** New protocols in communication and computing.

### PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Quantum State:** Information describing a quantum system.
- **No-Cloning Theorem:** Prevents perfect copying of unknown states.
- **Superposition:** Multiple states at once.
- **Quantum Entanglement:** Correlated particle states.
- **Quantum Communication:** Uses quantum properties for data transfer.



## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

Consider the following statements regarding quantum principles:

1. The no-cloning theorem forbids perfect copying of quantum states.
2. Approximate cloning is possible under certain conditions.
3. Quantum states can be copied exactly without restriction.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*"Quantum technologies are based on fundamental limitations and possibilities."*

Discuss the significance of the no-cloning theorem and recent advances in quantum state manipulation.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Explain the no-cloning theorem in quantum mechanics.
- Discuss how recent developments in quantum state cloning impact quantum technologies. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding quantum state cloning:

1. Perfect cloning of unknown quantum states is impossible.
2. Approximate cloning can be achieved.
3. It violates the principles of quantum mechanics.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 7.KALPAKKAM FAST BREEDER REACTOR ATTAINS CRITICALITY; DEFINING STEP

### WHY IN NEWS?

- India's Fast Breeder Reactor at Kalpakkam has attained "criticality," marking a major milestone in the country's nuclear energy programme, as highlighted by the Prime Minister.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Fast Breeder Reactor (FBR):**



- A. Produces more fissile material than it consumes.
- II. **India's Nuclear Programme:**
  - A. Designed to utilise limited uranium and abundant thorium reserves.
- III. **Project Site:**
  - A. Kalpakkam houses advanced nuclear research and reactors.

- **Sustainability:** Supports long-term clean energy goals
- **Technological Capability:** Demonstrates advanced nuclear expertise
- **Reduced Imports:** Less reliance on external fuel sources

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Criticality Achieved:** Reactor sustains nuclear fission independently.
- **Fuel Efficiency:** Converts non-fissile material into usable fuel (breeding).
- **Strategic Importance:** Reduces dependence on imported uranium.
- **Advanced Technology:** Uses fast neutrons instead of thermal neutrons.
- **Foundation for Thorium Use:** Enables transition to third stage of nuclear programme.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Criticality:** Self-sustaining nuclear chain reaction
- **FBR:** Produces more fuel than it consumes
- **Fast Neutrons:** Used in breeder reactors
- **Thorium:** Abundant in India, future nuclear fuel
- **Kalpakkam:** Major nuclear research hub

## INDIA'S THREE-STAGE NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

1. **Stage 1:** Pressurised Heavy Water Reactors (PHWRs) using uranium
2. **Stage 2:** Fast Breeder Reactors (like Kalpakkam) producing plutonium
3. **Stage 3:** Thorium-based reactors for long-term sustainability

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Energy Security:** Efficient use of nuclear fuel resources

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding nuclear reactors:*

  1. Fast breeder reactors produce more fissile material than they consume.
  2. Criticality refers to stopping a nuclear reaction.
  3. Thorium can be used as nuclear fuel in advanced stages.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?  
**Answer:** 1 and 3 only.
- **Mains PYQ:**

*"India's nuclear energy programme is*



*designed for long-term sustainability.”*

Discuss the role of fast breeder reactors in India's three-stage nuclear programme

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE

### QUESTION

- Explain the concept of criticality in nuclear reactors.
- Analyse the significance of fast breeder reactors in India's nuclear energy strategy. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC

### MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding fast breeder reactors:

1. They produce more fissile material than they consume.
2. They use fast neutrons.
3. They are unrelated to India's thorium programme.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

#### Options:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A



Subject

# *History, Art & Culture*



## 1,1,500-YEAR RESERVOIR FOUND ON ELEPHANTA ISLAND

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Archaeologists have discovered a 1,500-year-old water reservoir on Elephanta Island, shedding new light on **ancient water management systems and urban planning**.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Elephanta Island:**
  - A. Located near Mumbai, known for rock-cut cave temples.
- II. **Historical Period:**
  - A. Associated with early medieval dynasties.
- III. **Water Management:**
  - A. Essential for sustaining settlements and religious sites.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Ancient Engineering:** Carefully carved reservoir for water storage.
- **Sustainability:** Indicates rainwater harvesting practices.
- **Cultural Context:** Linked to temple complexes and settlements.
- **Archaeological Value:** Provides insight into lifestyle and planning.
- **Preservation Need:** Highlights importance of heritage conservation.

### SIGNIFICANCE

- **Historical Insight:** Evidence of advanced water systems in ancient India.
- **Urban Planning:** Shows integration of infrastructure with settlements.
- **Cultural Heritage:** Enhances the value of Elephanta as a heritage site.
- **Modern Relevance:** Lessons for sustainable water management.

### PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Elephanta Caves:** UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- **Rock-Cut Architecture:** Carved into natural rock.
- **Water Reservoirs:** Used for storage and conservation.
- **Rainwater Harvesting:** Ancient sustainable practice.
- **5th-6th Century CE:** Early medieval India.

### PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding ancient Indian architecture:*

  1. Rock-cut caves were used for religious purposes.
  2. Ancient India had systems of water management.
  3. Reservoirs were not used in ancient settlements.

Which of the statements given



above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*“Ancient Indian knowledge systems offer lessons for sustainable development.”*

Discuss with reference to water management practices in ancient India.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Discuss the significance of the discovery of an ancient reservoir on Elephanta Island.
- What does it reveal about water management and urban planning in ancient India? (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding Elephanta Island:

1. It is known for rock-cut caves.
2. It has evidence of ancient water management systems.
3. It is located in southern India.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 2.PHULE'S LEGACY OF REFORM PRAISED BY PRESIDENT

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The President of India recently praised the reformist legacy of Jyotirao Phule, highlighting his contributions to **social justice, education, and anti-caste movements**.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **19th Century India:**
  - A. Deeply entrenched caste discrimination and social inequalities.
- II. **Phule's Vision:**
  - A. Equality, rationalism, and education as tools for empowerment.
- III. **Reform Movements:**
  - A. Emergence of social reformers challenging orthodoxy.

### KEY CONTRIBUTIONS

- I. **Education for All:**
  - A. Opened schools for girls and lower castes.
- II. **Women's Empowerment:**
  - A. Advocated for widow remarriage and against child marriage.
- III. **Anti-Caste Movement:**
  - A. Criticised Brahmanical dominance and caste hierarchy.
- IV. **Satyashodhak Samaj:**



A. Founded Satyashodhak Samaj to promote social equality.

V. **Literary Works:**

A. Wrote on social injustice and exploitation.

3. He founded Satyashodhak Samaj.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 3 only.

• **Mains PYQ:**

*“Social reform movements laid the foundation for modern India.”*

Discuss the contributions of Jyotirao Phule in promoting social equality.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Social Justice:** Foundation for later reform movements.
- **Education Reform:** Early advocate of universal education.
- **Dalit Empowerment:** Inspired movements for equality.
- **Modern Relevance:** Ideas resonate with constitutional values.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Jyotirao Phule:** 19th-century social reformer.
- **Satyashodhak Samaj (1873):** Society for truth seekers.
- **Savitribai Phule:** Pioneer of women’s education.
- **Anti-Caste Movement:** Struggle against social hierarchy.
- **Social Reform:** Efforts to improve society.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

• **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding social reformers:*

1. Jyotirao Phule worked for women’s education.
2. He supported caste hierarchy.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the contributions of Jyotirao Phule to social reform in India.
- How do his ideas remain relevant in contemporary society? (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding Jyotirao Phule:*

1. He promoted women’s education.
2. He founded Satyashodhak Samaj.
3. He supported orthodox caste practices.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A



### 3.SUBHAS BOSE: REVOLUTIONARY THEORY VS PRAXIS

#### WHY IN NEWS?

- Renewed discussions on the legacy of Subhas Chandra Bose have highlighted the contrast between his **revolutionary ideas (theory)** and their **implementation (praxis)** in India's freedom struggle.

#### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Indian Freedom Struggle:**
  - A. Multiple ideological approaches—moderate, extremist, and revolutionary.
- II. **Bose's Ideology:**
  - A. Strong central leadership, socialism, and militant resistance.
- III. **Global Context:**
  - A. World War II created opportunities for anti-colonial struggles.

#### THEORY (IDEAS)\*\*

- Militant Nationalism:** Freedom through armed resistance.
- Complete Independence:** Immediate and uncompromising Swaraj.
- Strong State:** Centralised authority for nation-building.
- International Alliances:** Strategic cooperation with Axis powers.

#### PRAXIS (IMPLEMENTATION)\*\*

- Formation of INA:** Mobilised Indian soldiers abroad.
- Azad Hind Government:** Provisional government in exile.
- Military Campaigns:** Attempts to enter India via Northeast.
- Mass Mobilisation:** Inspired nationalist sentiment across India.

#### KEY CONTRAST

Aspect	Theory	Praxis
Method	Armed struggle	INA campaigns
Leadership	Centralised authority	Azad Hind Govt
Strategy	Global alliances	Axis cooperation
Goal	Immediate independence	Military action

#### SIGNIFICANCE

- Diversified Freedom Struggle:** Offering alternatives to non-violence.
- Psychological Impact:** Boosted nationalist morale.
- Military Legacy:** Inspired later armed forces ethos.
- Debate on Means:** Ends vs methods in achieving independence.



## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **INA:** Army formed to fight British rule.
- **Azad Hind Government:** Provisional government led by Bose.
- **Forward Bloc:** Party founded by Bose.
- **Militant Nationalism:** Use of force for independence.
- **World War II:** Context for Bose's strategy.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding Subhas Chandra Bose:*

1. He led the Indian National Army.
2. He supported non-violent resistance as the primary method.
3. He sought foreign alliances for India's freedom.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 3 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*"Different approaches marked India's freedom struggle."*

Discuss the role of Subhas Chandra Bose and the Indian National Army in achieving independence.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Analyse the difference between Subhas Chandra Bose's revolutionary

theory and its practical implementation.

- How did it influence India's freedom struggle? (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding Subhas Chandra Bose:*

1. He believed in armed struggle for independence.
2. He led the Indian National Army.
3. He opposed all foreign alliances.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 4.RECLAIMING AMBEDKAR FOR A MODERN ANDHRA PRADESH

### WHY IN NEWS?

- There is a renewed political and social effort in Andhra Pradesh to reinterpret and apply the ideas of B. R. Ambedkar in shaping governance, social justice, and development policies.



## BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Ambedkar's Philosophy:**
  - A. Equality, social justice, constitutionalism, and rationalism.
- II. **Role in Constitution:**
  - A. Architect of India's Constitution ensuring fundamental rights.
- III. **Contemporary Relevance:**
  - A. Persistent caste inequalities and socio-economic disparities.

## KEY DIMENSIONS OF "RECLAIMING"

- I. **Social Justice:**
  - A. Policies for Scheduled Castes and marginalized communities.
- II. **Education & Empowerment:**
  - A. Focus on access to quality education and representation.
- III. **Economic Inclusion:**
  - A. Land reforms, welfare schemes, and employment opportunities.
- IV. **Political Representation:**
  - A. Strengthening participation in governance.
- V. **Urban Development:**
  - A. Inclusive planning for growing cities.

## ISSUES & DEBATES

- I. **Selective Interpretation:**
  - A. Risk of politicising Ambedkar's ideas.
- II. **Symbolism vs Substance:**

- A. Use of legacy without meaningful policy action.

### III. **Regional Context:**

- A. Adapting national ideas to local realities.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Policy Direction:** Guides inclusive governance.
- **Social Cohesion:** Promotes equality and dignity.
- **Constitutional Values:** Reinforces democratic principles.
- **Development Model:** Focus on equity alongside growth.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **B.R. Ambedkar:** Chairman of Drafting Committee.
- **Social Justice:** Fair distribution of resources and opportunities.
- **Fundamental Rights:** Guaranteed by Constitution.
- **Directive Principles:** Guide state policy.
- **Reservation Policy:** Affirmative action for disadvantaged groups.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding B.R. Ambedkar.*

  1. He was the Chairman of the Drafting Committee.
  2. He advocated social equality.



3. He opposed constitutional democracy.  
Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**  
"Ambedkar's ideas remain relevant in contemporary governance."  
Discuss how his philosophy can guide modern policy-making.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the relevance of B.R. Ambedkar's ideas in shaping inclusive development in states like Andhra Pradesh.
- Discuss the challenges in translating his vision into practice. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding Ambedkar's philosophy:

1. It emphasises social justice and equality.
2. It supports constitutional governance.
3. It rejects democratic principles.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only  
B. 2 and 3 only

- C. 1 and 3 only  
D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 5. JAGANNATH TEMPLE JEWEL INVENTORY AFTER 48 YEARS

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Authorities have undertaken a long-pending inventory of valuables at the Jagannath Temple after nearly 48 years, raising issues of **heritage management, transparency, and temple administration.**

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Jagannath Temple:**
  - A. One of the **Char Dham pilgrimage sites.**
- II. **Temple Wealth:**
  - A. Includes gold, silver, and precious stones offered by devotees.
- III. **Previous Inventory:**
  - A. Last conducted several decades ago.
- IV. **Administration:**
  - A. Managed under state laws and temple committees.

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Comprehensive Documentation:**  
Listing ornaments stored in temple treasury.



- **Security Measures:** Ensuring safe handling and verification.
- **Transparency Push:** Addresses public concerns over temple assets.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Respect for religious sentiments during the process.
- **Legal Oversight:** Involvement of authorities and regulatory bodies.

- **Temple Treasury:** Stores valuables and offerings.
- **Rath Yatra:** Annual chariot festival.
- **Endowment Laws:** Govern temple administration.

## ISSUES & CHALLENGES

- **Delay:** Gap of nearly five decades raises concerns.
- **Security Risks:** Handling high-value assets.
- **Religious Sensitivities:** Balancing faith and administrative procedures.
- **Record Accuracy:** Ensuring proper documentation and verification.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Heritage Conservation:** Protects valuable cultural assets.
- **Good Governance:** Promotes transparency and accountability.
- **Public Trust:** Strengthens confidence in temple management.
- **Policy Lessons:** Model for managing other religious institutions.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Jagannath Temple:** Located in Puri, Odisha.
- **Char Dham:** Four major pilgrimage sites in India.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding Jagannath Temple:*

1. It is located in Odisha.
2. It is part of the Char Dham pilgrimage.
3. It is managed entirely by private authorities without state involvement.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*"Management of religious institutions involves balancing faith and governance."*

Discuss the challenges in ensuring transparency and accountability in temple administration.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the significance of conducting a jewel inventory at major religious institutions like the Jagannath Temple.
- Discuss the challenges involved in balancing tradition with transparency. (150 words)



## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC

### MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding temple administration:

1. Inventories help ensure transparency.
2. Religious institutions are free from any legal oversight.
3. Temple assets include donations and ornaments.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

#### Options:

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

Answer: A

## 6. THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL CONTINUITY

### WHY IN NEWS?

- In an era of rapid globalisation and technological change, debates are intensifying on preserving cultural identity, with institutions like UNESCO emphasising the need to safeguard **intangible cultural heritage**.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

#### I. Culture:

- I. **Culture:**
  - A. Includes language, art, customs, beliefs, and heritage.
- II. **Continuity:**
  - A. Passing cultural elements from one generation to another.
- III. **Modern Challenges:**
  - A. Globalisation, urbanisation, and digital influence disrupting traditions.

### KEY DIMENSIONS

- **Language Preservation:** Safeguarding linguistic diversity.
- **Traditional Knowledge:** Indigenous practices in agriculture, medicine, crafts.
- **Festivals & Rituals:** Maintain social bonds and identity.
- **Art & Craft Forms:** Sustaining livelihoods and heritage.
- **Value Systems:** Ethical and social norms.

### SIGNIFICANCE

- **Identity Formation:** Provides a sense of belonging.
- **Social Cohesion:** Strengthens community bonds.
- **Cultural Diversity:** Enriches global heritage.
- **Sustainable Practices:** Traditional knowledge supports ecological balance.
- **Soft Power:** Enhances a nation's global cultural influence.



## CHALLENGES

- **Globalisation:** Cultural homogenisation.
- **Urbanisation:** Decline of traditional lifestyles.
- **Commercialisation:** Loss of authenticity.
- **Generational Gap:** Reduced interest among youth.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Intangible Cultural Heritage:** Non-physical cultural expressions.
- **UNESCO:** Protects world heritage.
- **Cultural Diversity:** Variety of cultural expressions.
- **Traditional Knowledge:** Indigenous practices.
- **Heritage Conservation:** Preservation of cultural assets.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**  
*Consider the following statements regarding cultural heritage:*
  1. It includes intangible traditions.
  2. It is unaffected by globalisation.
  3. It contributes to social identity.Which of the statements given above is/are correct?  
**Answer:** 1 and 3 only.
- **Mains PYQ:**  
*"Cultural continuity is essential for sustainable development."*  
Discuss the importance of preserving

cultural heritage in the face of modern challenges.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the importance of cultural continuity in maintaining social identity and cohesion.
- Discuss the challenges posed by globalisation and suggest measures for preservation. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding cultural continuity:*

1. It involves transmission of traditions across generations.
2. It is unaffected by modernisation.
3. It contributes to social cohesion.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

### Options:

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A



## 7.CHOLA GANGAM LAKE DEVELOPMENT

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The restoration and development of Chola Gangam Lake has gained attention as part of efforts to **revive ancient water bodies and improve water management systems.**

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Historical Significance:**
  - A. Built during the reign of Rajendra Chola I.
- II. **Purpose:**
  - A. Designed as a large irrigation reservoir to support agriculture.
- III. **Present Condition:**
  - A. Degraded due to neglect, siltation, and encroachment.

### KEY FEATURES OF DEVELOPMENT

- I. **Desiltation:**
  - A. Removal of accumulated sediments to restore capacity.
- II. **Embankment Strengthening:**
  - A. Repair and reinforcement of bunds.
- III. **Water Management:**
  - A. Improved inflow and outflow systems.
- IV. **Ecological Restoration:**
  - A. Reviving surrounding biodiversity and wetlands.

### OBJECTIVES

- Restore **water storage capacity.**
- Improve **irrigation and groundwater recharge.**
- Preserve **cultural and historical heritage.**
- Enhance **local ecosystem health.**

### SIGNIFICANCE

- **Water Security:** Supports agriculture and local needs.
- **Climate Resilience:** Acts as a buffer against droughts and floods.
- **Cultural Heritage:** Revives ancient engineering practices.
- **Sustainable Development:** Promotes eco-friendly water management.

### CHALLENGES

- **Encroachment:** Illegal occupation of lake area.
- **Funding Issues:** High cost of restoration.
- **Maintenance:** Long-term upkeep required.
- **Urban Pressure:** Expansion affecting water bodies.

### PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Chola Dynasty:** Medieval South Indian empire.
- **Irrigation Tank:** Artificial reservoir for water storage.
- **Desiltation:** Removal of sediments.



- **Groundwater Recharge:**  
Replenishment of underground water.
- **Wetland Ecosystem:** Water-based ecological system.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**  
*Consider the following statements regarding traditional water systems:*

1. They were used for irrigation and storage.
2. They have no relevance in modern times.
3. They can support sustainable water management.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 3 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**  
*"Traditional water management systems hold relevance in modern water conservation."*  
Discuss with reference to historical reservoirs in India.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the significance of restoring historical water bodies like Chola Gangam Lake.
- How can such initiatives contribute to sustainable water management? (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding Chola Gangam Lake:*

1. It was built during the Chola period.
2. It served as an irrigation reservoir.
3. It has no role in modern water management.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A



Subject

# *Society & Social Issue*



## I. COUNTING PEOPLE IS NOT COUNTING DISASTER RISK

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Recent discussions on disaster preparedness highlight that **population data alone is insufficient to assess disaster risk**, emphasising the need for multi-dimensional risk assessment frameworks.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- Traditional Approach:**
  - Focused on population density to estimate risk.
- Modern Framework:**
  - Based on the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.
- Key Concept:**
  - Disaster risk = Hazard × Exposure × Vulnerability ÷ Capacity.

### KEY ISSUES

- Misleading Metrics:**
  - High population does not always mean high risk.
- Vulnerability Factors:**
  - Poverty, infrastructure, and governance gaps.
- Unequal Impact:**
  - Marginalised communities face higher risks.
- Climate Change:**

- Intensifies frequency and severity of disasters.**

### KEY DIMENSIONS OF DISASTER RISK

- Hazard:**
  - Natural events like floods, earthquakes, cyclones.
- Exposure:**
  - People and assets in hazard-prone areas.
- Vulnerability:**
  - Susceptibility to damage.
- Capacity:**
  - Ability to cope and recover.

### SIGNIFICANCE

- Better Policy Design:** Enables targeted disaster management strategies.
- Resource Allocation:** Focus on high-risk and vulnerable areas.
- Resilience Building:** Strengthens preparedness and recovery systems.
- Inclusive Development:** Protects vulnerable populations.

### CHALLENGES

- Data Gaps:** Lack of granular vulnerability data.
- Institutional Coordination:** Multiple agencies involved.
- Urbanisation:** Increasing exposure in cities.
- Climate Uncertainty:** Difficulty in predicting hazards.



## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Disaster Risk:** Probability of loss due to hazards.
- **Sendai Framework:** Global DRR framework (2015–2030).
- **Vulnerability:** Susceptibility to harm.
- **Exposure:** Presence in hazard zones.
- **Resilience:** Ability to recover from disasters.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

*Consider the following statements regarding disaster risk:*

1. It depends only on population size.
2. Vulnerability influences disaster impact.
3. Capacity can reduce disaster risk.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 2 and 3 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

*“Disaster risk is a function of more than just population exposure.”*

Discuss the components of disaster risk and their implications for policy.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Explain why population alone is not an adequate measure of disaster risk.

- Discuss the key components of disaster risk and their policy implications. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding disaster risk:*

1. It depends on hazard, exposure, and vulnerability.
2. Population size alone determines disaster risk.
3. Capacity can reduce disaster impact.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 2.LIMITS OF NEUTRALITY IN ADDRESSING CASTE

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Debates on social justice in India have highlighted that **“neutral” or caste-blind policies may fail to address entrenched caste inequalities**, raising questions about the adequacy of formal equality.



## BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Caste System:**
  - A. A hierarchical social structure with deep historical roots.
- II. **Constitutional Vision:**
  - A. Ensures equality while permitting special provisions for disadvantaged groups.
- III. **Legal Provisions:**
  - A. Articles 14, 15, and 16 provide for equality and affirmative action.
- IV. **Protective Laws:**
  - A. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989 aims to prevent caste-based discrimination and violence.

## WHAT IS "NEUTRALITY"?

- I. **Formal Equality:**
  - A. Treating everyone the same regardless of social background.
- II. **Caste-Blind Policies:**
  - A. Ignoring caste identities in policymaking.
- III. **Assumption:**
  - A. Equal treatment leads to equal outcomes.

## LIMITS OF NEUTRALITY

- I. **Structural Inequality:**
  - A. Historical disadvantages persist despite equal treatment.
- II. **Unequal Starting Points:**

- A. Marginalised groups lack access to resources and opportunities.
- III. **Invisible Discrimination:**
  - A. Subtle forms of caste bias remain unaddressed.
- IV. **Outcome Inequality:**
  - A. Neutral policies may perpetuate disparities.

## NEED FOR TARGETED APPROACHES

- I. **Affirmative Action:**
  - A. Reservations in education and employment.
- II. **Social Justice Policies:**
  - A. Focused welfare schemes for disadvantaged groups.
- III. **Legal Safeguards:**
  - A. Protection against discrimination and atrocities.
- IV. **Awareness & Inclusion:**
  - A. Addressing social attitudes and biases.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Substantive Equality:** Moves beyond formal equality to real equality.
- **Social Inclusion:** Integrates marginalised communities into mainstream.
- **Democratic Values:** Upholds justice and dignity.
- **Policy Effectiveness:** Ensures targeted impact.



## CHALLENGES

- **Political Sensitivity:** Caste issues are politically contentious.
- **Implementation Gaps:** Weak enforcement of laws.
- **Social Resistance:** Persistence of caste prejudices.
- **Balancing Equity & Efficiency:** Debate over extent of affirmative action.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Formal Equality:** Equal treatment under law.
- **Substantive Equality:** Equality in outcomes.
- **Affirmative Action:** Policies favouring disadvantaged groups.
- **Caste Discrimination:** Unequal treatment based on caste.
- **Social Justice:** Fair distribution of resources and opportunities.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**  
*Consider the following statements regarding equality.*
  1. Formal equality ensures equal outcomes.
  2. Substantive equality addresses structural disadvantages.
  3. Affirmative action aims to reduce inequality.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 2 and 3 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**  
*"Equality before law does not always ensure social justice."*  
Discuss in the context of caste inequalities in India.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Critically examine the limitations of neutrality in addressing caste inequalities in India.
- How can policies move towards achieving substantive equality? (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding equality and caste:*

1. Neutral policies always eliminate inequality.
2. Affirmative action aims to address structural disadvantages.
3. Substantive equality focuses on outcomes.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- Options:**
- A. 2 and 3 only
  - B. 1 and 2 only
  - C. 1 and 3 only
  - D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A



## 3.INDIA FACES CHALLENGE IN MEETING 2030 MATERNAL MORTALITY GOALS

### WHY IN NEWS?

- A recent study indicates that India may struggle to meet the **2030 maternal mortality reduction targets** under the Sustainable Development Goals.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR):**
  - A. Number of maternal deaths per 100,000 live births.
- II. **SDG Target (Goal 3):**
  - A. Reduce global MMR to less than 70 by 2030.
- III. **India's Progress:**
  - A. Significant decline in MMR over the years, but uneven across states.

### KEY FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

- I. **Slow Progress in Some Regions:**
  - A. High MMR persists in certain states.
- II. **Urban-Rural Divide:**
  - A. Rural areas face higher risks.
- III. **Healthcare Access Issues:**
  - A. Limited institutional deliveries and skilled birth attendance.
- IV. **Socio-economic Factors:**
  - A. Poverty, education, and nutrition influence outcomes.

### KEY ISSUES

- I. **Healthcare Infrastructure Gaps:**
  - A. Shortage of facilities and trained personnel.
- II. **Inequality:**
  - A. Disparities across regions and communities.
- III. **Awareness & Education:**
  - A. Lack of maternal health awareness.
- IV. **Nutrition Deficiency:**
  - A. Impacts maternal and child health.

### SIGNIFICANCE

- **Public Health Priority:** Maternal health is a key indicator of development.
- **SDG Commitment:** Reflects global responsibility.
- **Women's Empowerment:** Improves health and social outcomes.
- **Economic Impact:** Healthier mothers contribute to workforce productivity.

### CHALLENGES

- **Last-Mile Delivery:** Reaching remote and vulnerable populations.
- **Quality of Care:** Not just access, but quality matters.
- **Data Gaps:** Inadequate tracking in some regions.
- **Resource Constraints:** Funding and workforce limitations.



## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **MMR:** Maternal deaths per 100,000 live births.
- **SDG 3:** Good Health and Well-being.
- **Institutional Delivery:** Childbirth in a healthcare facility.
- **Skilled Birth Attendant:** Trained health professional.
- **Public Health Indicator:** Measure of health outcomes.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**  
*Consider the following statements regarding maternal health:*
  1. MMR is a key health indicator.
  2. Institutional deliveries reduce maternal mortality.
  3. Maternal mortality has no link with socio-economic factors.*Which of the statements given above is/are correct?*  
**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.
- **Mains PYQ:**  
*“Maternal health is central to achieving sustainable development.”*  
Discuss the challenges and measures required to reduce maternal mortality in India.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE

### QUESTION

- Examine the challenges faced by India in achieving the 2030 maternal mortality targets.
- Suggest measures to accelerate progress. (150 words)

### PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding maternal mortality:*

1. MMR measures maternal deaths per 100,000 live births.
2. Institutional deliveries can reduce maternal mortality.
3. Maternal mortality is unrelated to healthcare access.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

#### **Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A



## 4. TELANGANA'S GIG WORKERS LAW: THE LEGISLATION, AND HOW OTHER STATES HAVE FARED

### WHY IN NEWS?

- The Telangana Assembly has passed the **Telangana Gig and Platform Workers (Registration, Social Security and Welfare) Bill, 2026**, adding momentum to state-level efforts to regulate the gig economy and provide **social security to platform workers**.

### TELANGANA GIG WORKERS LAW: KEY FEATURES

- I. **Legal Recognition & Registration:**
  - A. Mandatory registration of gig workers with unique IDs.
- II. **Welfare Board:**
  - A. Dedicated board to administer welfare schemes and funds.
- III. **Welfare Fund (Levy):**
  - A. 1–2% levy on platform transactions to finance benefits.
- IV. **Social Security Benefits:**
  - A. Includes insurance, pension, maternity benefits, and accident cover.
- V. **Transparency & Fair Practices:**
  - A. Platforms must disclose pay structures, deductions, and algorithmic decisions.
- VI. **Grievance Redressal:**
  - A. Platform-level and state-level mechanisms for dispute resolution.

- VII. **Compliance & Penalties:**
  - A. Monetary penalties for non-compliance by aggregators.

### OBJECTIVES

- Provide **social security and dignity of work**.
- Regulate platform companies and ensure **fair working conditions**.
- Formalise the gig economy within a **legal framework**.

### HOW OTHER STATES HAVE FARED

#### 1. Rajasthan (Pioneer State)

- I. Enacted **Rajasthan Platform-Based Gig Workers Act, 2023**.
- II. Features: registration, welfare board, welfare fund.
- III. **Status:**
  - A. First mover, but implementation has been gradual and evolving.

#### 2. Karnataka

- I. Passed **Karnataka Platform-Based Gig Workers Act, 2025**.
- II. Features:
  - A. Welfare board, mandatory registration, social security benefits.
  - B. Welfare fee of 1–5% on transactions.
- III. **Status:**



- A. More advanced framework, but concerns remain over wage security and enforcement.

### 3. Bihar

- I. Passed **Gig Workers Act, 2025**.
- II. Features:
  - A. Registration, ID cards, welfare benefits (insurance, PF, maternity).
- III. **Status:**
  - A. Expanding coverage, but operationalisation still developing.

### 4. Jharkhand

- I. Passed **Gig Workers Act (2025)**.
- II. Features:
  - A. Registration, social security, grievance redressal.
- III. **Status:**
  - A. Framework exists, implementation yet to fully stabilise.

## COMMON FEATURES ACROSS STATES

- Registration of workers and platforms.
- Creation of **welfare boards and funds**.
- Provision of **social security benefits**.
- Grievance redressal mechanisms.

## KEY ISSUES & CHALLENGES

- I. **Worker Classification:**

- A. Gig workers are still treated as independent contractors (no full labour rights).

- II. **Implementation Gaps:**

- A. Laws exist, but execution (funds, boards, benefits) is slow.

- III. **Income Security:**

- A. Most laws do not guarantee **minimum wages**.

- IV. **Regulatory Overlap:**

- A. State laws must align with the **Code on Social Security, 2020**.

- V. **Platform Resistance:**

- A. Concerns over compliance costs and business models.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Social Protection:** Extends welfare to a rapidly growing workforce.
- **Labour Formalisation:** Recognises gig workers within legal frameworks.
- **Digital Economy Governance:** Regulates platform-based employment.
- **Model for Other States:** Telangana could set a benchmark for comprehensive regulation.

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Gig Worker:** Works outside traditional employer–employee relationship.
- **Platform Worker:** Works via digital platforms (e.g., delivery, ride-hailing).
- **Welfare Board:** Body managing benefits and schemes.
- **Social Security Code, 2020:** First central law recognising gig workers.



- **Aggregator:** Platform connecting service providers and customers.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

Consider the following statements regarding gig workers:

1. They are part of the formal employer–employee relationship.
2. They are recognised under the Social Security Code, 2020.
3. They typically receive full labour protections.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

“The rise of the gig economy requires new labour frameworks.”

Discuss the need for regulating gig work in India.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the key features of Telangana’s Gig Workers Law.
- How effective have similar legislations in other Indian states been in ensuring social security for gig workers? (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding gig worker laws in India:

1. Rajasthan was the first state to enact a law for gig workers.
2. Most state laws provide for welfare boards and social security.
3. All laws guarantee minimum wages for gig workers.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 5.SCREEN USE STUNTS KIDS’ SOCIAL GROWTH

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Recent studies highlight that excessive screen exposure among children is negatively impacting **social skills, communication, and emotional development.**

## BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

- I. **Rising Screen Exposure:**



- A. Increased use of smartphones, tablets, and digital media.
- II. **Pandemic Effect:**
  - A. Online learning and entertainment increased screen dependency.
- III. **Developmental Concerns:**
  - A. Early childhood is crucial for social and cognitive development.

- A. Anxiety, isolation, and behavioural issues.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Child Development:** Affects cognitive and emotional growth.
- **Education Outcomes:** Impacts learning and classroom interaction.
- **Social Skills:** Limits ability to build relationships.
- **Public Health Concern:** Growing issue in digital age.

## KEY FINDINGS

- I. **Reduced Social Interaction:**
  - A. Less engagement with peers and family.
- II. **Communication Delays:**
  - A. Slower development of language and conversation skills.
- III. **Emotional Impact:**
  - A. Difficulty in understanding emotions and empathy.
- IV. **Attention Issues:**
  - A. Increased risk of reduced attention span.

## CHALLENGES

- **Digital Dependence:** Hard to limit usage in modern lifestyle.
- **Lack of Awareness:** Parents unaware of long-term effects.
- **Balancing Technology:** Integrating benefits without harm.
- **Policy Gaps:** Limited regulation on screen exposure for children.

## KEY ISSUES

- I. **Overuse of Digital Devices:**
  - A. Excessive reliance on screens for entertainment and learning.
- II. **Parental Supervision Gaps:**
  - A. Limited monitoring of content and duration.
- III. **Sedentary Lifestyle:**
  - A. Reduced physical activity and outdoor play.
- IV. **Mental Health Concerns:**

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **Screen Time:** Time spent on digital devices.
- **Cognitive Development:** Growth of thinking and learning abilities.
- **Social Skills:** Ability to interact effectively.
- **Attention Span:** Duration of focus.
- **Digital Literacy:** Ability to use digital tools responsibly.



## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**

Consider the following statements regarding child development:

1. Social interaction is important for emotional growth.
2. Excessive screen time can affect attention span.
3. Digital devices have no impact on children's behaviour.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Answer:** 1 and 2 only.

- **Mains PYQ:**

"Technology has transformed childhood experiences."

Discuss the impact of excessive screen use on children's development and suggest measures to address it.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Examine the impact of excessive screen use on children's social and emotional development. Suggest measures to ensure balanced digital usage. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

Consider the following statements regarding screen use in children:

1. Excessive screen time can affect social development.
2. It improves all aspects of cognitive growth.
3. It can reduce attention span.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

**Options:**

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A

## 6. WHAT TB REVEALS ABOUT INDIA'S URBAN HEALTH SYSTEM

### WHY IN NEWS?

- Recent analyses show that **tuberculosis (TB)** is not just a disease but a **mirror of systemic gaps in India's urban health system**, highlighting inequalities in access, infrastructure, and governance.

### BACKGROUND / CONTEXT

I. **Disease Nature:**

- A. Caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, spreads via airborne droplets.

II. **Urbanisation:**

- A. Around **35% of India's population lives in cities**, increasing exposure risks.

III. **Policy Goal:**



- A. India aims to eliminate TB under national programmes, but progress is uneven.

- II. Shows that health outcomes depend on **living conditions, not just medical care.**

## WHAT TB REVEALS ABOUT URBAN HEALTH SYSTEM

### 1. Urban Poverty & Living Conditions

- Overcrowded housing and poor ventilation increase transmission.
- Informal settlements lack sanitation and healthcare access.

### 2. Fragmented Healthcare System

- Patients often visit **multiple providers before diagnosis.**
- Weak coordination between **public and private sectors.**
- Delays in diagnosis increase spread and severity.

### 3. Inequality in Access

- I. Migrants and informal workers face:
  - A. Lack of documentation
  - B. Disrupted treatment due to mobility
- II. Access to care is often **not portable across cities/states.**

### 4. Social Determinants of Health

- I. TB linked to:
  - A. Malnutrition
  - B. Poor working conditions
  - C. Pollution and co-morbidities

### 5. Missed Early Detection

- I. Long delays before seeking care and diagnosis.
- II. Leads to:
  - A. Continued transmission
  - B. Rise of drug-resistant TB

### 6. Weak Primary Healthcare in Cities

- Uneven distribution of urban primary health centres.
- Informal settlements often underserved.

## KEY ISSUES

- **“Missing Patients”:** Undiagnosed or unreported TB cases.
- **Drug Resistance:** Due to incomplete or delayed treatment.
- **Private Sector Dominance:** First point of care for many, but poorly regulated.
- **Stigma:** Delays treatment seeking and adherence.

## SIGNIFICANCE

- **Public Health Indicator:** TB reflects deeper systemic failures.
- **Urban Governance Issue:** Not just a medical problem, but linked to housing, labour, and welfare.
- **Equity Lens:** Highlights neglect of migrants and informal workers.



- **Policy Insight:** Ending TB requires **holistic urban development.**

## PRELIMS BOOSTER BOX

- **TB:** Airborne infectious disease affecting lungs.
- **MDR-TB:** Drug-resistant form of TB.
- **Nikshay:** India's TB tracking system.
- **Social Determinants:** Conditions like housing, nutrition, income.
- **Urban Health:** Health systems in city settings.

## PadhAI PYQ BOOSTER SECTION

- **Prelims PYQ:**  
*Consider the following statements regarding tuberculosis:*
  1. It spreads through airborne droplets.
  2. It is linked only to biological factors.
  3. Early diagnosis reduces transmission.**Answer:** 1 and 3 only
- **Mains PYQ:**  
*"Public health challenges in urban India are closely linked to socio-economic conditions."*  
Discuss with reference to tuberculosis.

## PadhAI MAINS PRACTICE QUESTION

- Tuberculosis is not merely a medical issue but a reflection of urban systemic failures.
- Discuss in the context of India's urban health system. (150 words)

## PadhAI-GENERATED UPSC MCQ

*Consider the following statements regarding TB and urban health:*

1. TB incidence reflects socio-economic conditions.
2. Urban areas are free from TB due to better healthcare.
3. Fragmented healthcare systems can worsen TB outcomes.

### **Options:**

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

**Answer:** A



Subject

# *Person in News*



# 1.Chanchal Kumar



## Identification: why in news?

**Chanchal Kumar** has been appointed as the new **Secretary of the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (I&B)** following a recent bureaucratic reshuffle by the Government of India.

## Core Facts

- **Institutional Role:** Senior **IAS officer (1992 batch, Bihar cadre)** appointed as Secretary, **Ministry of Information & Broadcasting**.
- **Previous Position:** Served as **Secretary, Ministry of Panchayati Raj**, focusing on strengthening grassroots governance.
- **Administrative Experience:** Held key roles in **rural development, infrastructure, and governance reforms** at both state and central levels.

- **Policy Contribution:** Played a role in implementing **decentralization initiatives** and strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs).
- **Governance Focus:** Known for work in **digital governance, transparency, and service delivery improvements**.
- **State-Level Roles:** Served in various capacities in **Bihar government**, including departments related to development and administration.
- **Central Deputation Experience:** Has experience working with **central ministries**, contributing to national-level policymaking.
- **I&B Ministry Significance:** The ministry oversees **media regulation, broadcasting policy, film certification, and public communication**.
- **Strategic Importance:** His appointment comes at a time of increasing focus on **digital media regulation, misinformation, and content governance**.



# 2. Personality

## Module: Anand Sharma



### Identification: Why in News?

Senior Congress leader **Anand Sharma** has recently been in the news for emphasizing that **India can play a constructive diplomatic role in global peace efforts**, highlighting its strategic autonomy and credibility in international relations.

### Core Facts

#### I. Institutional Role:

- A. Former **Union Minister of Commerce & Industry (2009–2014)**
- B. Former **Minister of State for External Affairs**
- C. Senior leader of the Indian National Congress
- II. **Parliamentary Career:**
  - A. Long-serving **Rajya Sabha Member** representing Himachal Pradesh
- III. **Diplomatic Experience:**
  - A. Played a key role in shaping India's **trade diplomacy** and global economic engagement
- IV. **International Engagement:**
  - A. Represented India at forums like the World Trade Organization and **UN platforms**
- V. **Policy Contributions:**
  - A. Advocated for **inclusive globalization** and protection of developing nations' trade interests
- VI. **Recent Position (News Context):**
  - A. Argued that India's **non-aligned and balanced foreign policy** enables it to mediate and support global peace initiatives
- VII. **Political Standing:**
  - A. Known as a **moderate voice on foreign policy and economic issues**
- VIII. **Awards & Recognition:**
  - A. Honored with international recognitions for contributions to diplomacy and trade (e.g., European parliamentary honors)



## 4. Literary / Intellectual Contributions

- I. Regular contributor of **articles and policy opinions** on:
  - A. Global trade systems
  - B. Multilateral diplomacy
  - C. India's foreign policy strategy

### Landmark Achievements

- Led India's negotiations during critical phases of **global trade discussions at WTO**
- Strengthened India's position in **multilateral economic diplomacy**
- Advocated for **equitable global trade rules** benefiting developing economies

## 3. Personality

# Module: Min Aung Hlaing



### Identification: Why in News?

**Min Aung Hlaing** has been in the news after being **elected/named as the President of Myanmar**, consolidating his authority amid ongoing political instability following the military takeover.

### Core Facts

- I. **Institutional Role:**
  - A. Current **President of Myanmar**
  - B. Chief of the **Tatmadaw (Myanmar Armed Forces)**
- II. **Political Background:**
  - A. Rose through military ranks to become **Commander-in-Chief (2011)**
- III. **Key Event Association:**
  - A. Led the **2021 Myanmar military coup**, overthrowing the elected civilian government
- IV. **Governance Role:**
  - A. Head of the **State Administration Council (SAC)**, the ruling military body
- V. **International Relations:**
  - A. Faces sanctions and criticism from Western countries; maintains closer ties with nations like China and Russia
- VI. **Human Rights Concerns:**
  - A. Accused internationally of overseeing military actions against ethnic minorities, including the Rohingya
- VII. **Electoral Context:**
  - A. His elevation to presidency is seen as an attempt to **legitimize military rule through controlled political processes**
- VIII. **Strategic Importance:**



- A. Myanmar's instability impacts regional dynamics, especially for neighbors like India

### Literary / Intellectual Contributions

- I. Not known for formal literary works
- II. Public speeches focus on:
  - A. National unity
  - B. Military-led governance
  - C. Stability and sovereignty narratives

### Landmark Achievements / Actions

- Consolidated military control post-2021 coup
- Reorganized Myanmar's political structure under military dominance
- Central figure in shaping Myanmar's current authoritarian governance model

## 4. Personality

### Module: Esmail Khatib (Context: Iran intel chief killed)



### Identification: Why in News?

Iran's Intelligence Minister **Esmail Khatib** has been reported **killed in an Israeli strike during the ongoing Iran conflict**, at a time when tensions escalated alongside pressure from Donald Trump, including deadlines and warnings related to military escalation.

### Core Facts

- I. **Institutional Role:**
  - A. Former **Minister of Intelligence of Iran (since 2021)**



- B. Key figure in Iran’s internal security and intelligence apparatus
- II. **Organizational Link:**
  - A. Associated with Iran’s intelligence network under the **Islamic Republic’s security framework**
- III. **Political Context:**
  - A. Operated under leadership of the Supreme authority in Iran
- IV. **Key Event (Death):**
  - A. Killed in **Israeli airstrike during the 2026 Iran conflict**, marking a major blow to Iran’s intelligence leadership
- V. **Strategic Role:**
  - A. Oversaw **counterintelligence, internal surveillance, and national security operations**
- VI. **Conflict Context:**
  - A. His death occurred amid escalating **Iran–Israel–US tensions** and military exchanges
- VII. **Geopolitical Significance:**
  - A. Killing of top intelligence officials reflects **targeted decapitation strategy** in modern warfare
- VIII. **Broader Escalation:**
  - A. Part of a series of assassinations of high-ranking Iranian officials during the conflict

## Landmark Achievements / Actions

- Headed Iran’s **intelligence ministry during a critical geopolitical phase**
- Played a role in shaping Iran’s **internal security and surveillance mechanisms**
- Central figure in Iran’s **strategic response to foreign threats**

# 5. Justice S. Muralidhar Varma (commonly referred to as Justice Varma)



## Literary / Intellectual Contributions

- I. Not known for major literary works
- II. Public statements largely focused on:
  - A. National security
  - B. Intelligence operations
  - C. Counter-espionage narratives

## Identification: Why in News?

**Justice Varma** has recently been in the news after **resigning amid ongoing judicial proceedings/inquiry**, raising questions about **judicial accountability, ethics, and**



**institutional integrity** within the higher judiciary.

### Core Facts

- I. **Institutional Role:**
  - A. Served as a **Judge in the Higher Judiciary (High Court/Supreme Court context depending on case)**
- II. **Judicial Function:**
  - A. Responsible for adjudication of **constitutional, civil, and criminal matters**
- III. **Key Event (Resignation):**
  - A. Resigned amid **ongoing proceedings/investigation into conduct**, an uncommon but significant development
- IV. **Constitutional Framework:**
  - A. Judges are governed by provisions under the Constitution of India
  - B. Removal typically involves **impeachment by Parliament**, making resignation a notable alternative
- V. **Judicial Accountability:**
  - A. Case highlights mechanisms like **in-house inquiry procedures** within the judiciary
- VI. **Ethical Dimension:**
  - A. Raises issues of **judicial ethics, probity, and public trust**
- VII. **Institutional Impact:**
  - A. Such resignations affect the **credibility and independence of the judiciary**
- VIII. **Broader Debate:**

- A. Sparks discussion on **transparency vs judicial independence**

### Literary / Intellectual Contributions

- I. Judges typically contribute through:
  - A. **Judgments and legal reasoning** shaping jurisprudence
- II. Specific notable judgments (if any) can be added based on case details

### Landmark Achievements / Actions

- Delivered judgments contributing to **constitutional interpretation and rule of law**
- The resignation itself becomes a **landmark institutional event** in debates on judicial conduct

## 6. Marco Rubio



## Identification: Why in News?

**Marco Rubio**, the **U.S. Secretary of State**, is in the news for his **scheduled visit to India in May 2026**, aimed at strengthening bilateral ties and reviewing cooperation in areas like trade, defence, and the Indo-Pacific strategy.

## Core Facts

- I. **Institutional Role:**
  - A. **U.S. Secretary of State (2025– )**
  - B. Senior member of the U.S. executive, responsible for foreign policy
- II. **Political Background:**
  - A. Former **U.S. Senator from Florida**
  - B. Associated with the Republican Party
- III. **Diplomatic Role:**
  - A. Key architect of U.S. foreign policy under the Donald Trump administration
- IV. **India Visit Context:**
  - A. First visit to India as Secretary of State
  - B. Focus on **trade, critical minerals, defence cooperation, and Quad engagement**
- V. **Strategic Objective:**
  - A. Aims to **reset and strengthen India-US relations**, especially after trade-related tensions
- VI. **Multilateral Engagement:**
  - A. Linked to possible meetings of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (Quad) involving India, U.S., Japan, and Australia
- VII. **Foreign Policy Focus Areas:**
  - A. Indo-Pacific strategy

- B. Countering China's influence
- C. Supply chain resilience and emerging technologies

## VIII. **Recent Diplomatic Activity:**

- A. Held talks with India's Foreign Secretary on bilateral cooperation and regional issues

## Literary / Intellectual Contributions

- I. Known for policy positions and speeches on:
  - A. National security
  - B. U.S. global leadership
  - C. Strategic competition with China

## Landmark Achievements / Actions

- Key role in shaping **U.S. foreign policy in Indo-Pacific and West Asia**
- Promoted stronger **strategic partnership with India**
- Involved in major geopolitical decisions under the Trump administration



# 7. Jyotirao Phule



## Identification: Why in News?

The legacy of **Jyotirao Phule** has been recently **praised by the President of India**, highlighting his enduring contributions to **social justice, education, and anti-caste reform**, especially on commemorative occasions linked to his birth anniversary.

## Core Facts

- I. **Institutional Role:**
  - A. Founder of the Satyashodhak Samaj
- II. **Social Reformer:**
  - A. Pioneer of **anti-caste movement** and advocate for **equality and social justice**
- III. **Education Initiatives:**

- A. Established one of the **first schools for girls in India (1848)** along with Savitribai Phule
- IV. **Focus Areas:**
  - A. Women's education
  - B. Upliftment of **Shudras and Dalits**
  - C. Opposition to Brahmanical orthodoxy
- V. **Ideological Contribution:**
  - A. Promoted **rationalism, human dignity, and social equality**
- VI. **Colonial Context:**
  - A. Worked during British rule, using reform as a tool for **social transformation**
- VII. **Recognition:**
  - A. Honored with the title **"Mahatma"** for his contributions
- VIII. **Contemporary Relevance (News Context):**
  - A. His ideas continue to influence **inclusive governance, social justice policies, and constitutional values**

## Literary / Intellectual Contributions

- I. Authored the seminal work Gulamgiri (1873), critiquing caste oppression
- II. Writings focused on:
  - A. Social inequality
  - B. Religious orthodoxy
  - C. Rights of marginalized communities

## Landmark Achievements

- Founded **Satyashodhak Samaj** to promote social equality



- Opened **schools for girls and marginalized communities**
- Laid the intellectual foundation for **anti-caste and social justice movements in India**

## 8. Pope Leo XIV (verify name in context)



### Identification: Why in News?

A figure referred to as **“Pope Leo”** has been in the news for **remaining unfazed by criticism from Donald Trump**, reflecting tensions between religious leadership and political rhetoric on global issues.

### Core Facts (8–10 Points)

- I. **Institutional Role:**
  - A. Head of the Catholic Church
  - B. Sovereign of the Vatican City
- II. **Spiritual Leadership:**
  - A. Guides over **1 billion Catholics worldwide**
- III. **Global Influence:**
  - A. Plays a key role in **moral diplomacy, peacebuilding, and humanitarian advocacy**
- IV. **Political Interaction:**
  - A. Often engages with world leaders, including figures like Donald Trump
- V. **Issue Areas:**
  - A. Climate change
  - B. Migration
  - C. Poverty and inequality
  - D. Peace and conflict resolution
- VI. **Recent Context (News):**
  - A. Maintained a **calm and principled stance despite political criticism**, reinforcing independence of religious authority
- VII. **Diplomatic Role:**
  - A. Uses **soft power and moral authority** rather than coercive influence
- VIII. **Historical Continuity:**
  - A. Papacy has long influenced **global ethics and international relations**

### Literary / Intellectual Contributions

- I. Papal writings such as encyclicals (e.g., *Laudato Si'* if referring to Pope Francis)



- II. Themes include:
  - A. Environmental ethics
  - B. Social justice
  - C. Human dignity

## Landmark Achievements / Actions

- Promoting **interfaith dialogue and global peace initiatives**
- Advocating for **climate action and sustainable development**
- Acting as a **moral voice in global politics**

# 9. Péter Magyar



## Identification: Why in News?

**Péter Magyar** has been in the news after **defeating incumbent Prime Minister Viktor Orbán in a major electoral upset in Hungary**, marking a significant political shift and the rise of a new opposition force.

## Core Facts

- I. **Institutional Role:**
  - A. Leader of a **new opposition movement/party in Hungary**
- II. **Political Background:**

- A. Former insider linked to Hungary's political establishment before emerging as a **critic of the ruling regime**

### III. **Electoral Breakthrough:**

- A. Won against long-time leader Viktor Orbán, ending a prolonged period of dominant rule

### IV. **Reform Agenda:**

- A. Advocates for **anti-corruption measures, democratic reforms, and institutional transparency**

### V. **Governance Vision:**

- A. Emphasizes **rule of law, independent judiciary, and media freedom**

### VI. **European Context:**

- A. His rise is significant for Hungary's relations with the European Union

### VII. **Public Support Base:**

- A. Gains traction among **urban voters, youth, and pro-democracy groups**

### VIII. **Political Significance:**

- A. Represents a **challenge to populist-nationalist politics in Europe**

## Literary / Intellectual Contributions

- I. Not known for major literary works
- II. Public discourse focuses on:
  - A. Governance reform
  - B. Anti-corruption
  - C. Democratic accountability

## Landmark Achievements



- Achieved a **major electoral victory against an entrenched leadership**
- Emerged as a **symbol of democratic revival in Hungary**
- Shifted national political discourse toward **transparency and reform**

## 10. Mark Carney



### Identification: Why in News?

**Mark Carney** is in the news after **securing a majority in recent elections**, marking a significant political development and consolidating his leadership at the national level in Canada.

### Core Facts

- I. **Institutional Role:**
  - A. Political leader in Canada
  - B. Former Governor of the Bank of Canada and Bank of England
- II. **Economic Expertise:**
  - A. Renowned economist with global experience in **central banking and financial regulation**

- III. **Global Recognition:**
  - A. First non-British Governor of the Bank of England
- IV. **Election Context:**
  - A. Secured **majority mandate**, indicating strong public support for his leadership and policies
- V. **Policy Orientation:**
  - A. Focus on **economic stability, climate finance, and sustainable development**
- VI. **International Role:**
  - A. Active in global financial institutions like the Financial Stability Board
- VII. **Climate Advocacy:**
  - A. Prominent voice on **climate risk in financial systems** and green transition
- VIII. **Governance Approach:**
  - A. Combines **technocratic expertise with political leadership**

### Literary / Intellectual Contributions

- I. Co-authored/associated with works on economics and finance such as:
  - A. Value(s): Building a Better World for All
- II. Focus areas include:
  - A. Ethical capitalism
  - B. Financial stability
  - C. Climate economics

### Landmark Achievements

- Successfully led two major central banks during periods of **global financial uncertainty**



- Played a key role in shaping **post-2008 financial reforms**
- Emerged as a **global leader in climate finance discourse**
- Achieved a **major electoral victory**, transitioning from technocrat to political leader

## 11. Personality Module: Justice Yadav



### Identification: Why in News?

**Justice Yadav** has been in the news for **retiring amid ongoing impeachment proceedings**, bringing attention to issues of **judicial accountability, constitutional safeguards, and ethics in public office**.

### Core Facts

- I. **Institutional Role:**
  - A. Served as a **Judge in the Higher Judiciary (High Court/Supreme Court)**
- II. **Constitutional Position:**
  - A. Judges operate under provisions of the Constitution of India
- III. **Impeachment Context:**

- A. Faced **impeachment proceedings initiated in Parliament** for alleged misconduct
- IV. **Retirement Development:**
  - A. Retired before completion of the impeachment process, a scenario seen in past cases as well
- V. **Legal Framework:**
  - A. Removal governed by **Articles 124(4) & 217** (for SC & HC judges respectively)
- VI. **Judicial Accountability Mechanism:**
  - A. Includes **in-house inquiry procedures and parliamentary oversight**
- VII. **Ethical Dimension:**
  - A. Raises concerns about **probity, integrity, and transparency in judiciary**
- VIII. **Institutional Impact:**
  - A. Such events affect **public trust in judicial institutions**

### Literary / Intellectual Contributions

- I. Contributions mainly through:
  - A. **Judgments and legal interpretations**
- II. Specific landmark rulings (if known) can strengthen answers

### Landmark Achievements / Actions

- Delivered judgments contributing to **legal and constitutional jurisprudence**
- The episode itself is significant for debates on **judicial reforms and accountability**



Subject

# *Places in News*



## 5 Punjab

1. Northwestern state of India
2. Shares border with:
  - a. Pakistan
3. Boundary marked by:
  - a. International Border (IB) (not LoC here)
4. Region shaped by:
  - a. Partition of India 1947
5. Long history of:
  - a. Cross-border tensions
  - b. Security challenges

## 1 Bastar

1. Located in southern Chhattisgarh
2. Borders:
  - i. Odisha (east)
  - ii. Telangana (south)
  - iii. Maharashtra (west)
3. Lies in the Dandakaranya region (important in both geography & history)

## 3 Elephanta Island

- Located in Arabian Sea, off the coast of Mumbai
- Part of Maharashtra's coastal island system
- Accessible via ferry from Gateway of India
- Rock-cut architecture linked with geology
- Deccan Trap region

## 6 Jagannath Temple

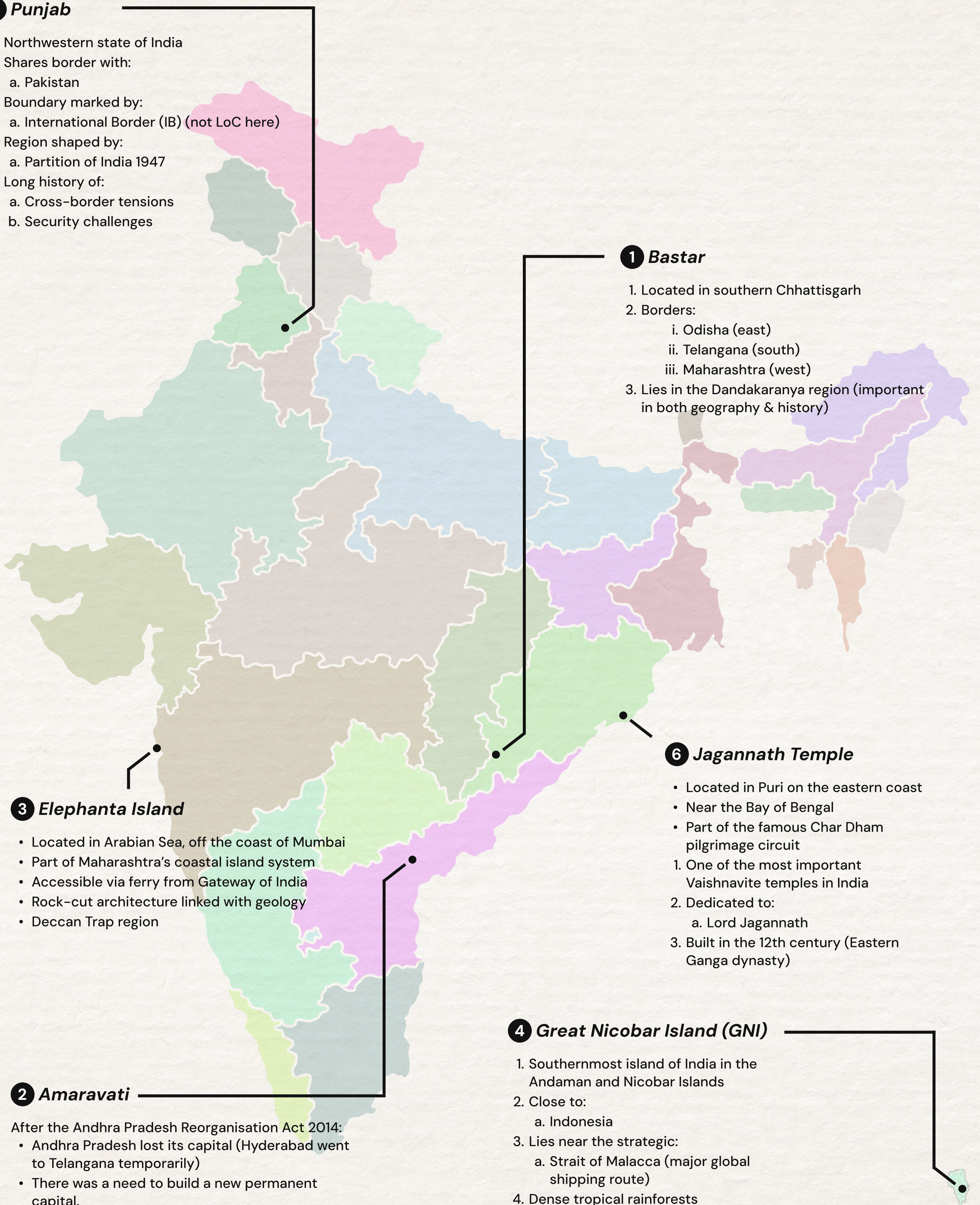
- Located in Puri on the eastern coast
  - Near the Bay of Bengal
  - Part of the famous Char Dham pilgrimage circuit
1. One of the most important Vaishnavite temples in India
  2. Dedicated to:
    - a. Lord Jagannath
  3. Built in the 12th century (Eastern Ganga dynasty)

## 2 Amaravati

- After the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act 2014:
- Andhra Pradesh lost its capital (Hyderabad went to Telangana temporarily)
  - There was a need to build a new permanent capital.
  - Andhra Pradesh Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Act 2020
  - Legal basis for the 3-capital model

## 4 Great Nicobar Island (GNI)

1. Southernmost island of India in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands
2. Close to:
  - a. Indonesia
3. Lies near the strategic:
  - a. Strait of Malacca (major global shipping route)
4. Dense tropical rainforests
5. Rich biodiversity (part of global hotspot)



## 9 Jammu and Kashmir

1. Located in northern India in the Himalayan region
2. Borders:
  - a. Pakistan (west via LoC)
  - b. China (north-east via LAC in Ladakh region)
3. Key valley region: Kashmir Valley
4. Himalayan terrain:
  - a. Dense forests
  - b. Mountain valleys
  - c. Narrow access routes

## 7 Manipur

1. Located in Northeast India
2. Borders:
  - a. Myanmar (east)
  - b. Indian states: Nagaland, Mizoram, Assam
- Key geography:
- Hilly terrain + valley region (Imphal Valley)
- Part of Indo-Myanmar borderland zone

## 10 Shekha Jheel Bird Sanctuary

- Located in Uttar Pradesh
  - Near the city of Aligarh
  - Part of the upper Ganga-Yamuna plains region
1. Prelims angle:
    - Wetlands of Uttar Pradesh
    - Map-based location of Ramsar sites in India

## 11 Odisha

1. Odisha becomes the first Indian state to adopt MSP
2. Important because Odisha coast:
  - a. Is cyclone-prone
  - b. Has rich fisheries
  - c. Has major ports (Paradip, Dhamra)
3. Improves disaster resilience planning
4. Helps balance:
  - a. Industrial development
  - b. Coastal ecology

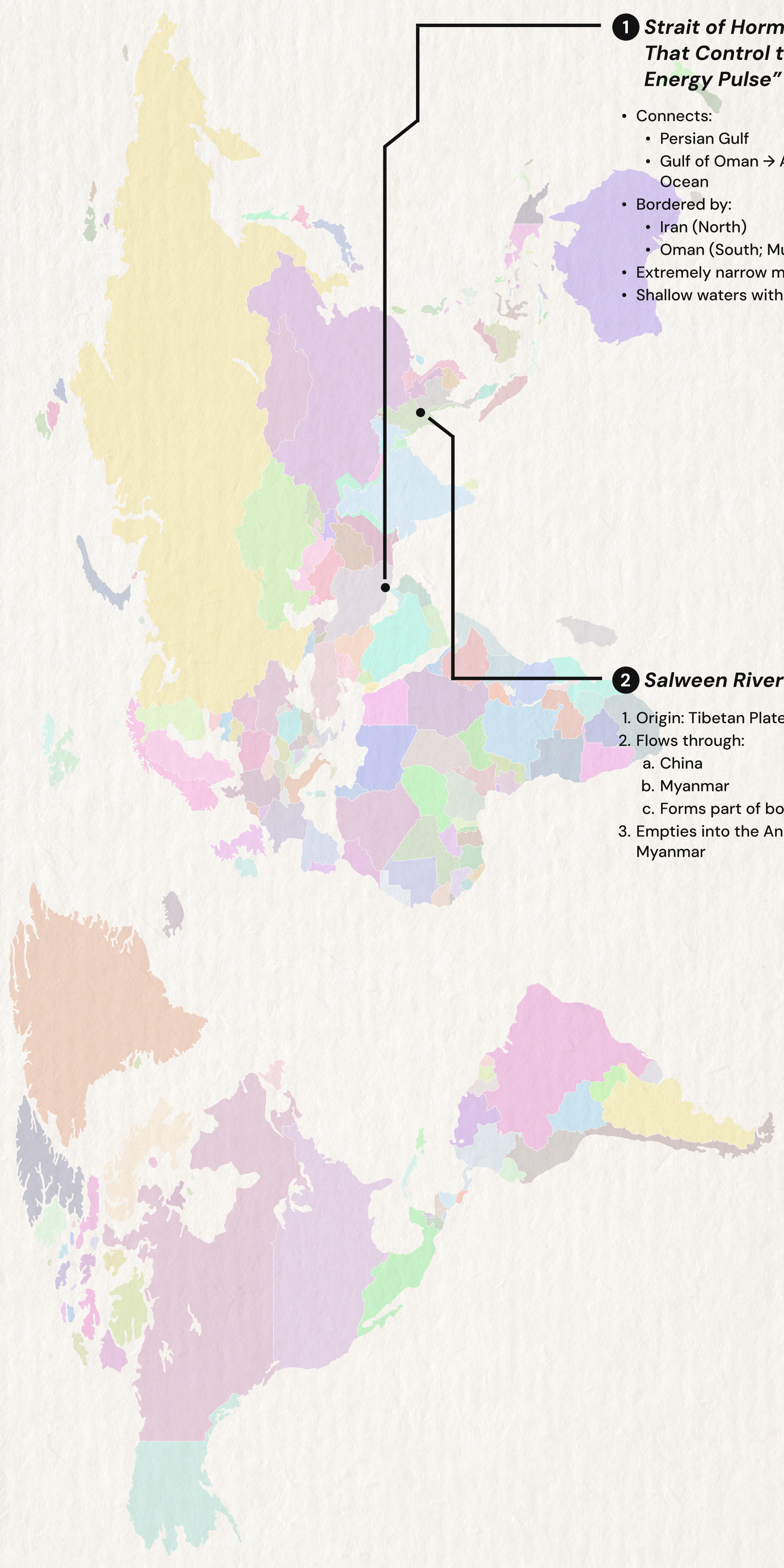
## 8 Sundarbans

1. Largest mangrove forest in the world
2. Located in the delta of:
  - a. Ganga River
  - b. Brahmaputra River
  - c. Meghna River
3. Spans:
  - a. India (West Bengal)
  - b. Bangladesh
4. Home to iconic species like:
  - a. Royal Bengal Tiger
5. Cultural livelihood:
  - a. Fishing, honey collection (mouling communities)

## 12 Chola Gangam Lake

- Located in Tamil Nadu
  - Associated with the ancient Chola heartland region
  - Linked to irrigation networks in the Kaveri delta region
1. Built/expanded during the Chola dynasty
  2. Linked to the legacy of:
    - a. Chola Empire
  3. Known for advanced water management systems:
    - a. Tanks (eris)
    - b. Reservoir networks
    - c. Canal irrigation





**1 Strait of Hormuz – “21 Miles That Control the World’s Energy Pulse”**

- Connects:
  - Persian Gulf
  - Gulf of Oman → Arabian Sea → Indian Ocean
- Bordered by:
  - Iran (North)
  - Oman (South; Musandam Peninsula)
- Extremely narrow maritime chokepoint
- Shallow waters with limited

**2 Salween River**

1. Origin: Tibetan Plateau in China
2. Flows through:
  - a. China
  - b. Myanmar
  - c. Forms part of border with Thailand
3. Empties into the Andaman Sea via Myanmar