

Factly Weekly

Compilation

2024

**For UPSC CSE Prelims
Exam**

**3rd Week
July 2024**

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UPSC Syllabus- International Relations

US Secret Service- Mandate and Functioning

Why in the News?

With the recent assassination attempt on Donald Trump, calls have been made for the US Secret Service and other security agencies to explain the major security breach.

About the US Secret Service



Source- Indian Express

About	Details
Founded	The United States Secret Service was founded in 1865. It is one of the oldest federal investigative law enforcement agencies.
Initial Mandate	Its initial mandate was to combat the counterfeiting of US currency.
Change of Mandate	After the assassination of then-US President William McKinley in 1901, the Secret Service assumed full-time responsibility for the safety of the President. The US Secret Service assumed full time responsibility in 1902.
Structure and Department	US Secret Service comes under the Department of Homeland Security. It employs approximately 3,200 special agents, 1,300 Uniformed Division officers, and more

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	than 2,000 technical, professional and administrative support personnel.
Other Protection Mandate	The US secret Service is mandated to protect the following- a. Vice president, the president-elect, their immediate families b. Former presidents and their spouses (except when the spouse remarries) and children of former presidents until age 16 c. Major presidential and vice presidential candidates and their spouses within 120 days of a general presidential election. (Eligible candidates are identified by the Secretary of Homeland Security after consultation with an advisory committee)
Functioning and Powers	a. It consists of two teams- The Counter sniper team and the counter assault team . The counter-sniper team uses long-range binoculars and has sniper rifles, while the counter-assault team works to eliminate threats so that other agents can shield and take away the person they are protecting. b. Before large-scale events like campaign rallies, US secret service agents scan the venue for bombs or other threats . The US Secret service is supported in this task by the Explosive Ordnance Disposal teams and communications resources of the Military. c. Secret Service has the permission to carry firearms and to make arrests without warrants for any offence or felony under 'reasonable grounds'.

World Heritage Young Professionals Forum 2024

Why in the news?

The World Heritage Young Professionals Forum 2024 is an integral prelude to the 46th Session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. It was inaugurated recently at the Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya Institute of Archaeology in New Delhi.

About the Event



Figure 1.Source: PIB

i) Dates: 14th to 23rd July 2024

ii) Location: Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya Institute of Archaeology, New Delhi

iii) Theme: World Heritage in the 21st Century: Building Capacities and

Exploring Opportunities for Youth

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iv) **Hosted by:** Ministry of Culture through the Archaeological Survey of India

iv) **Forum Activities:** The Forum brings together 50 young professionals (20 from India and 30 from abroad) to enhance their skills in protecting and promoting World Heritage.

v) **Key Focus Areas:**

- i) Climate Change Impact: Examining how climate change affects World Heritage sites.
- ii) Innovative Technologies: Integrating new technologies for heritage promotion.
- iii) Community Involvement: Encouraging participative heritage conservation with community engagement.
- iv) Sustainable Tourism: Promoting sustainable tourism and entrepreneurship among youth.

About the World Heritage Young Professionals Forum 2024:

- i) The World Heritage Young Professionals Forum serves as a platform for intercultural learning and exchange.
- ii) This forum aims to enhance the expertise and capacities of young professionals in protecting, preserving, and promoting natural and cultural World Heritage.
- ii) It enables youth to engage with heritage experts, discuss preservation challenges, and explore new roles in heritage conservation.
- iii) This year's Forum focuses on understanding the World Heritage Convention, addressing climate change, and leveraging innovative technologies for heritage management.

FishMIP Initiative

Why in the news?

The Ecosystem Model Intercomparison Project (FishMIP) report projects that exploitable fish biomass could decline by more than 10% by mid-century, particularly under high-emission scenarios, affecting many regions globally.

About FishMIP Initiative



Figure 2. Source: FAO

i) Launch: The Fisheries and Marine Ecosystem Model Intercomparison Project (FishMIP) was officially launched in 2013 by FAO.

ii) Purpose: It provides knowledge to industry and governments to support effective planning for adaptive and resilient seafood sectors in the face of climate change.

iii) Network: FishMIP includes over 100 marine ecosystem

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modellers and researchers from around the world.

iv) Collaboration: FishMIP and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) collaborate to understand the long-term impacts of climate change on marine ecosystems and fisheries using state-of-the-art numerical models.

v) FishMIP2.0: It was established in 2024 to enhance the reliability of modelling projections and address a broader set of policy-related questions relevant to food security and marine resource management, with a continued focus on climate change.

About the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)

Aspects	Description
About	1. It is a specialized agency of the United Nations. 2. It is leading international efforts to defeat hunger and improve nutrition and food security.
Headquarter	Rome, Italy.
Goal	To achieve food security for all, ensure people have regular access to enough high-quality food to lead active, healthy lives.
Members	1. 195 members, including 194 countries and the European Union. 2. World Food Programme (WFP) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) are its sister bodies.
Reports Published	1. The State of the World's Forests (SOFO) 2. The State of World Fisheries and Aquaculture (SOFIA) 3. The State of Agricultural Commodity Markets (SOCO) 4. The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI)

UN Water Convention

Why in the news?

Recently, Ivory Coast joined the United Nations Water Convention, becoming the 10th African nation to do so.

About UN Water Convention

1. The UN Water Convention, also known as the Convention on the **Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes**, was adopted in **Helsinki in 1992** and **entered into force in 1996**.
2. It is a unique legally binding instrument that **promotes the sustainable management of shared water resources, supports the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, prevents conflicts, and fosters peace and regional integration.

History

1. The Convention was originally negotiated as a regional framework for the pan-European region. Following an amendment procedure, all UN Member States have been able to accede to it since March 2016.

2. Chad and Senegal became the first African Parties in 2018.

3. Iraq acceded in March 2023 as the first country from the Middle East, Namibia joined in June 2023 as the first country from Southern Africa, and Panama became the first country from Latin America to join in July 2023.

4. Requirements for Parties:

i) Parties to the Convention are required to prevent, control, and reduce transboundary impacts, use transboundary waters in a reasonable and equitable way, and ensure their sustainable management.

ii) Parties that border the same transboundary waters must cooperate by entering into specific agreements and establishing joint bodies.

5) As a framework agreement, the Convention does not replace bilateral and multilateral agreements for specific basins or aquifers and instead it fosters their establishment, implementation, and further development.

6) Significance:

i) The Convention is a powerful tool to promote and operationalize the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs.

ii) The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) services the UN Water Convention.

About Ivory Coast

Ivory Coast shares eight transboundary river basins, including the Black Volta, Bia, Tanoe, Comoe, Niger, Sassandra, Cavally, and Nuon, with six of its neighbors: Ghana, Burkina Faso, Mali, Guinea, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.

Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM)

Why in the news?

India and Japan plan to establish a Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) for carbon trading and carbon credit adjustment. The countries aim to sign a Memorandum of Cooperation to formalize the JCM.

About Joint Crediting Mechanism (JCM) Mechanism



Figure 3. Source: smefutures.com

1. The JCM will be formed under **Article 6.2 of the Paris Agreement**. The implementation will adhere to the relevant domestic laws and regulations of both countries.

2. The committee will **develop rules and guidelines for the JCM**, covering project cycle procedures, methodologies, project design documents, monitoring, and third-party entity designation.

3. The mechanism ensures mutual **recognition of credits towards the NDCs of both countries**, avoiding double counting. Each government can authorize part of the JCM credits for international mitigation purposes.
4. Carbon credits will be **allocated through a structured process**, and a registry will track these credits.
5. Credits will be allocated to the respective registries of India and Japan and used towards their NDCs to cut emissions and adapt to climate impacts.
6. Japan will facilitate the transfer of technology, finance, and capacity building for new technologies under the JCM.

Economic and Environmental Benefits

1. The mechanism is expected to boost job creation by attracting investments in low-carbon and clean technologies.
2. The JCM will facilitate the diffusion of leading decarbonizing technologies, equipment, machinery, products, systems, and infrastructure.

UPSC Syllabus- Science and Technology

Tirzepatide weight loss Drug- Working and Side Effects

Why in News?

With the development of various weight loss drugs emerging as a game changer for obesity treatment in recent years, the demands for commercial availability of these drugs have been increasing in India. An expert committee of India's drug regulator has given its approval for the **launch of tirzepatide- a weight loss drug**.

Genesis of the weight loss drugs

The US FDA approved a drug- **containing semaglutid-** as an active ingredient to treat type 2 diabetes. The US doctors observed an interesting side-effect of the drug- weight loss. This made the pharmaceutical companies explore semaglutide as a weight loss drug for people without diabetes. These drugs led to significant weight loss and are in soaring demands.

Other pharma giants used **tirzepatide as the active ingredient in these drugs**. These drugs also led to significant weight losses and are in extreme demand worldwide.

About Tirzepatide and semaglutide



Weight loss drug tirzepatide, marketed by US pharma giant Eli Lilly as Zepbound, is on the cusp of getting regulatory approval in India.

Source-The Indian Express

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Aspect	Description
About	Semaglutide and tirzepatide are polypeptides . These are small proteins that boost the levels of naturally-occurring hormones in the body . These specifically boost the level of glucagon-like-peptide 1 (GLP-1) , which control weight through the brain and digestive tract.
Functioning	a. These polypeptides lead to higher GLP-1 levels. These GLP-1 when released in the gut, spark a reaction by stimulating neurons that alter gut function , leading to a sense of fullness/satiety without having eating a lot. b. These also help to manage glucose levels, making them an effective treatment for diabetes. c. While semaglutide only targets GLP-1 receptors , tirzepatide boosts a second hormone- glucose-dependent insulintropic polypeptide (GIP) . The GIP also regulates weight through receptors in brain and fat cells.
Prescribed For	These drugs can be prescribed to those who are a. Obese (with a body mass index of over 30), or overweight (with a BMI between 27 and 30) b. Have at least one other health condition related to their weight (such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or type 2 diabetes).
Side Effects	The side effects include a. Nausea, diarrhoea, vomiting, constipation, abdominal pain, indigestion, injection-site reactions, fatigue, allergic reactions, belching, hair loss, and heartburn. b. Risk of thyroid tumours, including thyroid cancer . c. Risks of weight gain back if drug is stopped

Ministry of Defence (MoD) has notified a fifth positive indigenisation list (PIL)

Why in the news?

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has notified a fifth positive indigenisation list (PIL) consisting of 346 defence items. This initiative aims to boost Aatmanirbharta (self-reliance) in defence production and reduce imports by Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs).

About the initiative

i) Objective of the initiative: To ensure that these 346 items are procured exclusively from the Indian industry after specified timelines, as indicated on the MoD's Srijan portal.

ii) Srijan Portal: It has been launched in 2020. The portal provides a platform for DPSUs and service headquarters (SHQs) to offer defence items for indigenisation to private industries, including MSMEs and startups.

iii) Benefits for the Domestic Defence Industry: The PIL offers assurance to the domestic defence industry, encouraging investment in the development of defence products by reducing the risk of the MoD importing these items from the global market.

iv) Key Items for Indigenisation: The items include strategically important line replacement units (LRUs), systems, sub-systems, assemblies, sub-assemblies, spares, components, and raw materials. The import substitution value of these items is worth Rs 1,048 crore.

Involvement of DPSUs

- i) The DPSUs involved in the fifth PIL are Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL), Bharat Dynamics Ltd (BDL), Bharat Earth Movers Ltd (BEML), India Optel Ltd (IOL), Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Ltd (MDL), Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers Ltd (GRSE), and Hindustan Shipyard Ltd (HSL).
- ii) These DPSUs have begun issuing expressions of interest (EoIs) and requests for proposals (RFPs) on their respective websites.

Patriot Air Defence System

Why in the news?

The United States and its allies will send Ukraine five more air defence systems, including **Patriot missile batteries** and components.

About Patriot Air Defence System



Figure 4. Source-The Hindu

Description-It stands for **Phased Array Tracking Radar for Intercept on Target**. This is a versatile **surface-to-air missile defence system** designed to intercept tactical ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, and advanced aircraft in any weather and altitude. It is the **U.S. Army's** most advanced air defence system.

Deployment-It was first used in combat during the **1991 Gulf War** and later during the 2003 U.S. invasion of Iraq. Recently, it has been deployed in **Ukraine (2023)** to counter Russian missile attacks.

Features-

Mobility	It can be moved on trucks or trailers , deployable in less than an hour
Components	A) Radar system for detection and tracking B) Engagement Control Station (ECS) C) Launching stations D) Interceptor missiles
Range	Average range of 150 km
Altitude	interceptor missiles can reach an altitude of more than 24 kilometers and hit targets up to 160 kilometers away

Read More- [Iron Dome Defence System](#)

EEG and Its Significance

Why in the news?

This year marks the 100th anniversary of the first **human electroencephalogram** (EEG), created by German physiologist Hans Berger.

EEG **measures the electrical activity in the brain** generated by neurons. Researchers use EEG in fields like neuroscience, cognitive psychology, and neurolinguistics.

About EEG



Figure 5. Source: TH

i) EEG stands for electroencephalography- 'Electro' pertains to electricity, 'encephalo' to the brain, and 'graphy' to representation.

ii) EEG is commonly used to **diagnose epilepsy** and **monitor anaesthesia effects**, sleep patterns, coma activity, and brain death.

iii) **Working of EEG-**

Neurons in the brain move electrically charged particles, creating electrical activity. EEG tests visualize this activity and help distinguish between normal and abnormal brain states.

iv) **Advantage of EEG-** EEG setups are **simple** and **cost-effective**. The equipment is small, doesn't emit radiation or noise, and is non-invasive and portable.

v) **Disadvantages of EEG-**

a. Setting up an EEG test takes time, as this process includes applying gel and placing electrodes. **Thicker hair can affect EEG readings.**

b. EEG is good at tracking rapid electrical activity in the brain but is **biased towards signals near the brain's surface**. It may not accurately pinpoint the origin of electrical activity within the brain.

To overcome limitations, EEG is often used with other tests like MRI and advanced data processing methods.

Research related to LUCA and origin of life

Why in the news?

All life on Earth can be traced back to the Last Universal Common Ancestor (LUCA). A recent study suggests that LUCA likely existed just 400 million years after Earth's formation. Further analysis indicates that this organism probably had an early immune system, suggesting it was already combating viruses.

Early Theories on the Origin of Life

1. In the 1920s, Alexander Oparin and J. B. S. Haldane proposed the first theories about the origin of life, suggesting that molecules in a “primordial soup” self-organized into early life forms. This idea is known as the Oparin-Haldane hypothesis.

2. Supporting Experiments:

i) The Miller-Urey experiment in 1952 demonstrated that under certain conditions, inorganic compounds could form amino acids, the building blocks of proteins.

ii) Stanley Miller and Harold Urey mixed methane, ammonia, and water, and applied an electric current, simulating lightning, which resulted in the creation of amino acids.

iii) While the experiment’s environmental assumptions may not fully align with early Earth conditions, it proved that amino acids could arise from inorganic molecules.

3. Alternative Theories: Some researchers propose that meteorites brought the building blocks of life to Earth. Discoveries of extraterrestrial organic material and amino acids on asteroids support this hypothesis.

About LUCA and the Molecular Clock

i) The molecular clock theory, proposed by Emile Zuckerkandl and Linus Pauling and later refined by Motoo Kimura, helps estimate the timing of evolutionary events by analyzing the rate of genetic mutations.

ii) Researchers calibrate the molecular clock using known evolutionary events and fossil records.

iii) A study published in Nature Ecology and Evolution by researchers from the University of Bristol and Exeter estimated that the Last Universal Common Ancestor (LUCA) originated around 4.2 billion years ago, shortly after Earth formed.

iv) This suggests LUCA predates previous estimates of life’s origin on Earth, which were based on fossil records dating back 3.4 billion years.

v) The Last Universal Common Ancestor (LUCA) likely had a small genome with about 2.5 million bases and around 2,600 proteins, sufficient for survival in its niche.

vi) Metabolites produced by LUCA could have supported a secondary ecosystem, aiding the emergence of other microbes.

Implications and Significance

i) These findings significantly advance our understanding of how life emerged and evolved on Earth.

ii) The study also enhances our ability to search for similar forms of life across the universe.

iii) Insights from this research may contribute to engineering synthetic organisms for industrial, chemical, and biological processes, and creating ecosystems on other planets.

Late Blight Disease

Why in the news?

Recently, CPRI issued an advisory related to **late blight disease** threatening potato crops.

About Late Blight Disease

1. Late blight is a **fungal infection** caused by *Phytophthora infestans*.
2. It seriously **threatens potato crops** causing significant yield losses and reducing tuber quality.
3. **Weather Conditions Favor Disease Spread:** Cool and moist Weather conditions are ideal for the spread of late blight disease.

Advisory for Farmers

- i) **Proactive Management:** Emphasis was placed on timely management to prevent disease outbreaks.
- ii) **Spray fungicide** containing **mancozeb chlorothalonil** at 0.2% (2 kg in 1,000 litres of water per hectare) immediately if the crop is not yet showing symptoms. Apply fungicide every 10 days, depending on the disease's intensity.
- iii) **Use fungicides** like cymoxanil + mancozeb, fermion + mancozeb, or dimethomorph + mancozeb.
- iv) **Field Management Tips:** It has been suggested to ensure good drainage in fields to prevent waterlogging.
- vi) There is a need to remove weeds to reduce the risk of fungal infection.

UPSC Syllabus: Polity and nation

Supreme Court upholds the right of divorced Muslim women to claim maintenance

Context: The article discusses the Supreme Court judgment in **Mohd Abdul Samad vs The State of Telangana**. The judgment upholds the right of divorced Muslim women to claim maintenance under Section 125 of the CrPC, despite the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act of 1986, resolving longstanding legal confusion.

What Did the Supreme Court Decide?

The Supreme Court's decision in **Mohd Abdul Samad vs The State of Telangana** can be summarized as follows:

1. **Upheld Rights:** The Court upheld the divorced Muslim woman's right to seek maintenance under Section 125 of the CrPC, asserting that this right remains unaffected by the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act of 1986.
2. **Rejection of Contrary Arguments:** It rejected the husband's argument that after the enactment of the 1986 Act, maintenance could only be claimed under this Act.
3. **Clarification of Law:** The judgment resolved ambiguity stemming from varied High Court decisions, providing clarity that Section 125 still applies to divorced Muslim women.
4. **Secular Provision:** This decision reinforces the applicability of Section 125 as a universal, secular provision for maintenance, ensuring all women have equal access to this legal remedy.

What Was the Existing Precedent?

The existing precedent was established by the Supreme Court in the 2001 case **Danial Latifi and Another vs Union of India**:

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1. **Background:** Danial Latifi was Shah Bano's lawyer in her case, **Mohd Ahmed Khan vs Shah Bano Begum**, where the Supreme Court initially upheld her right to maintenance, leading to the enactment of the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986.
2. **Ruling:** The Court ruled that the 1986 Act is constitutionally valid and interpreted Section 3(a) to secure divorced Muslim women's financial future.
3. **Specifics:** It required the husband to provide maintenance during the iddat period and plan for the wife's future needs within that period, ensuring her long-term financial stability.
4. **Impact:** This interpretation upheld the simultaneous applicability of Section 125 of the CrPC, confirming that the new Act did not negate these rights.

What is the significance of Section 125 of the CrPC?

1. Section 125 is a socially beneficial provision that applies to all women, regardless of religion. It ensures that women who cannot maintain themselves receive maintenance from their husbands.
2. Justice V R Krishnaiyer, in **Fuzlunbi vs K Khader Vali and Another (1980)**, emphasized that this section enforces maintenance as a secular obligation for social welfare, benefiting the entire community of women.
3. The Supreme Court clarified that denying maintenance rights under Section 125 to divorced Muslim women would violate their fundamental rights under Articles 14, 15, and 21 of the Constitution.
4. The Court's ruling ensures that divorced Muslim women have the same maintenance rights as other women in India.

Karnataka Bill Mandates 50% Local Quota in Management Positions

Why in the news?

The Karnataka Cabinet has approved a Bill mandating quotas for local candidates in management and non-management positions in various industries and establishments.

The Bill aims to ensure greater employment opportunities for local residents in Karnataka, promoting the use of Kannada and addressing the need for skilled local workers in various industries.

Key Provisions of the Bill

- i) Management Positions: The Bill requires that 50% of management positions be filled by local candidates.
- ii) Non-Management Positions: It also mandates that 75% of non-management positions be occupied by local candidates.

Definition of Local Candidate

- i) A local candidate is defined as an individual born in Karnataka, domiciled in the state for at least 15 years, capable of speaking, reading, and writing Kannada legibly, and who has passed a test conducted by the nodal agency.
- ii) Candidates must have a secondary school certificate with Kannada as a language or pass a Kannada proficiency test specified by the nodal agency.

iii) Training for Local Candidates: If qualified or suitable local candidates are not available, industries and establishments, in collaboration with the government, are required to take steps to train local candidates within three years.

Money Bill

Why in the news?

The Supreme Court is set to hear petitions challenging the government's use of the "Money Bill route" to pass certain legislation. Money Bills do not require passage in Rajya Sabha, allowing for faster enactment.

About Money Bill

1. A Money Bill deals with specific financial matters such as taxation, government spending, and loans.
2. It can only be introduced in Lok Sabha and, if passed, is sent to Rajya Sabha for recommendations. However, Lok Sabha is not obligated to accept these recommendations.

Constitutional Provisions

1. **Article 109:** This describes the process for Money Bills, highlighting that they only need to be passed by Lok Sabha.
2. **Article 110:** This strictly defines what constitutes a Money Bill, listing specific subjects like taxation and government funds.

Criteria for a Bill to be Considered a Money Bill

The bill must contain only provisions related to the following:

1. The bill should include provisions for the imposition, abolition, remission, alteration, or regulation of any tax.
2. The bill must deal with the regulation of the borrowing of money or the provision of any guarantee by the Government of India.
3. The bill should address the custody of the Consolidated Fund of India or the Contingency Fund of India. It should also include provisions for the payment of money into or the withdrawal of money from any such fund.
4. The bill must contain provisions for the appropriation of money out of the Consolidated Fund of India.
5. The bill should declare any expenditure to be charged on the Consolidated Fund of India or propose an increase in the amount of any such expenditure.
6. The bill should deal with the receipt of money on account of the Consolidated Fund of India or the public account of India. It should also address the custody or issue of such money.
7. The bill can include any matter incidental to any of the matters specified above.

Key Supreme Court Cases

1. **Challenge to Aadhaar Act:** The Supreme Court upheld the constitutionality of the Aadhaar Act, which was passed as a Money Bill. The court ruled in favor by a 4-1 majority. Justice D Y Chandrachud argued that

passing the Aadhaar Act as a Money Bill was an abuse of the constitutional process and limited Rajya Sabha's role.

2. Finance Act, 2017: The Finance Act, 2017 included amendments that were unrelated to the subjects listed in Article 110, such as service conditions of Tribunal members. A five-judge Bench struck down the Tribunal Rules but referred the Money Bill aspect to a seven-judge Bench, stating the Aadhaar case did not sufficiently define a valid Money Bill.

Role of Finance Commission

Why in the news?

The 16th Finance Commission, led by former Niti Aayog Vice-Chairman Arvind Panagariya, has started seeking public suggestions on its mandate.

About Finance Commission

1. The Finance Commission is a constitutional body established under Article 280 of the Indian Constitution to **recommend the distribution of tax revenues** collected by the Central government among the Centre and various States in India.
2. Its primary role is to **ensure a fair allocation of financial resources**, balancing the fiscal needs of both the Centre and the States.

Role of the Finance Commission

1. **Distribution of Tax Revenues:** The Finance Commission advises on the **division of net proceeds of taxes between the Centre and the States** (vertical devolution) **and among the States** (horizontal devolution). It aims to ensure that States have adequate funds to fulfill their responsibilities.
2. **Principles Governing Grants-in-Aid:** The Commission suggests **principles that should govern the grants-in-aid of the revenues of the States out of the Consolidated Fund of India**. These grants are provided to help States manage fiscal deficits and undertake specific development projects.
3. **Augmenting Local Bodies' Resources:** The Finance Commission also **recommends measures to augment the revenues of municipalities and panchayats**. This is crucial for ensuring that local bodies have sufficient funds to carry out their functions effectively.
4. **Additional Financial Recommendations:** It may also be tasked with other financial matters referred to it by the President of India, such as suggesting measures to improve the fiscal health of the States.

5. Decision on Horizontal Devolution:

The horizontal devolution, or the distribution of funds among States is determined by a formula devised by the Finance Commission. This formula takes into account various factors, including:

- i) **Population:** A State's population is a significant factor in determining its share of the tax revenue.
- ii) **Income Levels:** The per capita income and overall economic condition of a State are considered to ensure equitable distribution.
- iii) **Geographical Area:** The size of the State is factored in to address regional disparities.
- iv) **Fiscal Discipline:** States demonstrating better fiscal management may receive additional incentives.

6. Duration of Recommendations: The recommendations of the Finance Commission are typically valid for five years.

Foreigners Tribunals (FTs)

Why in the news?

Recently, the Assam government instructed the Border wing of the State's police not to forward cases of non-Muslims who entered India illegally before 2014 to the Foreigners Tribunals.

This aligns with the Citizenship (Amendment) Act of 2019, which allows non-Muslims including Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Parsis, Jains, and Buddhists fleeing persecution in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan to apply for citizenship.

About Foreigners Tribunals (FTs)

1. Foreigners Tribunals (FTs) are quasi-judicial bodies established under the Foreigners (Tribunals) Order of 1964, which is based on the **Foreigners' Act of 1946**.
2. Their primary purpose is to determine whether a person suspected of being a foreigner is an Indian citizen.
3. These tribunals are unique to Assam, as other states **handle cases of alleged illegal immigrants** under the Foreigners' Act without the use of FTs.

4. Structure and Operation

- i) Each FT is headed by a member who is typically a judge, advocate, or civil servant with judicial experience.
- ii) According to the Ministry of Home Affairs, there were 300 FTs in Assam as of 2021. However, the State's Home and Political Department reports that only 100 of these tribunals are currently functioning.

5. Functioning of an FT

- i) An FT operates with **powers similar to a civil court in certain matters**, such as summoning individuals, examining them under oath, and requiring the production of documents.
- ii) Upon receiving a reference from the concerned authority, an **FT must serve a notice to the person suspected of being a foreigner within 10 days**.
- iii) The individual then has 10 days to respond to the notice and another 10 days to provide evidence supporting their case.
- iv) The tribunal is required to resolve the case **within 60 days of the reference**. If the individual fails to prove their citizenship, the FT can order their detention in a transit camp for eventual deportation.

UPSC Syllabus: Indian Economy

Status of India's Merchandise and Services Export

Why in news?

The Commerce Ministry has reported that India's merchandise exports has **grown for the third consecutive month in June**. It has risen by **2.55% to \$35.2 billion**.

Status of India's Merchandise and Services Export

1. June 2024 Trade Performance

- i) Merchandise exports grew by 2.55% to \$35.2 billion.
- ii) Imports increased by 5% to \$56.2 billion.
- iii) The trade deficit widened by 9.4% compared to the previous year.
- iv) June 2024's exports and imports were the second highest in 10 years, second only to the figures in June 2022.
- v) Major growth drivers included engineering goods (10.3% increase), electronics goods (16.9% increase), drugs and pharmaceuticals (9.9% Increase), chemicals (3.3% increase), and coffee (70% increase).
- vi) Petroleum exports decreased by 18.3% to \$5.5 billion. and petroleum imports increased by 19.6% to \$15.05 billion.

2. Record Highs in Exports

- i) Total merchandise and services exports **reached \$200.3 billion in the first quarter of 2024-25**, surpassing the previous high of \$197.1 billion in 2022-23.
- ii) Services exports are estimated at **\$30.3 billion**, an 8.9% increase from the previous year.

3. Future Prospects

- i) If growth trends continue, **India could exceed \$800 billion in total exports** this year.
- ii) The government is targeting six key sectors and 20 countries to boost exports.

4. Past Performance

Total exports in 2023-24 reached **\$778.2 billion**, a 0.42% increase from the previous year. To reach the \$800 billion mark in 2024-25, exports need to grow by 2.8%.

RBI updated rules on fraud risk management

Why in the news?

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has **updated its rules on fraud risk management** for various financial entities.

RBI Revises Fraud Risk Management Rules

a. The revised rules apply to commercial banks (including regional rural banks), All India Financial Institutions, urban, state, and central cooperative banks, non-banking finance companies (NBFCs), and housing finance companies.

- b. The RBI issued **three new master directions to replace the older ones**. These directions are based on a thorough review of the previous rules and current issues.
- c. The new rules emphasize principles and guidelines to **strengthen fraud risk management** and **enhance the role of the Board in governance and oversight**.
- d. Regulated Entities (REs) **must follow principles of natural justice** before labeling individuals or entities as fraudulent, in line with the Supreme Court's March 2023 judgment in the case of **State Bank of India versus Rajesh Agarwal**.
- e. The RBI has withdrawn 36 existing circulars related to fraud risk management to simplify rules and reduce the compliance burden on financial entities.

Increase in India's foreign currency assets (FCA)

Why in the news?

The **return on India's foreign currency assets (FCA) has doubled over the past two years**. As of March 31, 2024, the total value of securities in FCA was \$468.98 billion.

What are the Interest Rate Impact?

RETURN ON FCA	
Year	Return (%)
2019-20	2.65
2020-21	2.10
2021-22	2.11
2022-23	3.73
2023-24	4.21

Source: RBI

Figure 6. Source: TH

i) Due to **rising interest rates in the US and other developed countries**, the return on FCA increased to 4.21% in March 2024 from 2.11% in March 2022. This resulted in the RBI earning over \$19 billion in interest income for the fiscal year ending in March 2024.

ii) The rate of return on FCA was 3.73% in FY2023, 2.10% in FY2021, and 2.65% in FY2020.

Gold Reserves of India

i) During FY24, the RBI **reduced gold held abroad by around 50 tonnes**, bringing the total to 387.26 metric tonnes. RBI reduced its gold holding due to high cost of keeping gold abroad.

iii) As of March 2024, the **RBI held 822.10 metric tonnes of gold**, with 408.31 metric tonnes held domestically and 26.53 metric tonnes as gold deposits.

About FCA

i) India's Foreign Exchange Reserves comprise **Foreign Currency Assets, Gold, SDR's and Reserve Bank position with International Monetary Fund (IMF)**.

ii) Foreign currency assets include investments in **US Treasury bonds, Bonds/Treasury Bills of other selected Governments, deposits with foreign central banks, foreign commercial banks etc.**

Composition of FCA:

- i) As of March 2024, out of the total FCA of \$570.95 billion–
 - a) \$468.99 billion was invested in securities.
 - b) \$62.17 billion was deposited with other central banks and the BIS.
 - c) \$39.79 billion comprised deposits with commercial banks overseas.
- ii) A small portion of the reserves is managed by external asset managers to explore new strategies and diversify the portfolio. These investments are governed by the RBI Act, 1934.

National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID)

Why in the news?

The government wants to increase the capital base of the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development, or NaBFID, to 1 trillion through support from banks.

About National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development (NaBFID)

Aspects	Description
About	1. It was set up in 2021 under the National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development Act, 2021. 2. It is a development Finance Institution in India which focuses on long-term infrastructure financing. 3. It is regulated and supervised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) as an All-India Financial Institution (AIFI).
Objective	Its capital base should be increased to 1 trillion INR with support from banks.
Purpose	To provide specialized financing for infrastructure development in India.
Goals	1) Addressing gaps in long-term non-recourse finance for infrastructure. 2) Strengthening the development of bonds and derivatives markets in India. 3) Boosting the country's economy sustainably.

About Development Finance Institutions (DFIs):

- 1. It is an organization owned by the government or public institutions to fund infrastructure and large-scale projects.
- 2. They step in where it is often unviable for large banks to lend due to project scale and long-term nature.
- 3. Types of Funds Provided: They provide medium-Term funds including financing for 1-5 years and Long-Term funds including financing for more than 5 years.

UPSC Syllabus- Art and Culture

Opening of the Treasury of Jagannath temple after 46 years

Why in News?

Recently, the treasury of the famous Jagannath Temple located in Puri was opened after 46 years. These 46 years saw legal battles, controversies, and debates, on the Ratna Bhandar, or sacred treasury, of the Shree Jagannath Temple in Puri.

About the Jagannath Temple Ratna Bhandar

The Jagannath Puri Temple Ratna Bhandar consists of two chambers- **Bahar Bhandar** (outer chamber) and **Bhitar Bhandar** (inner chamber). These chambers contain the jewels of the three sibling deities- **Lord Balabhadra, Lord Jagannath, and Devi Subhadra**.

Last Inventory Efforts- The inventory list was last prepared in 1978. It recorded a total of 454 gold articles with a net weight of 12,838 Bharis (128.38 kg) and 293 silver articles weighing 22,153 Bharis (221.53 kg).

Need for Opening the Ratna Bhandar- Concerns were raised about the structural stability of the Ratna Bhandar and the safety of ornaments.

High Level Committee- The newly elected Government of Odisha constituted a high-level committee **under the chairmanship of former Orissa High Court judge Justice Biswanath Rath** (retd.) to **supervise the process of cataloguing the valuables**. The committee suggested different standard operating procedures and cataloguing of ornaments and safety of valuables.

About the Jagannath Temple



Figure 7. Source- Wikipedia

a. The Jagannath Temple is a Hindu temple dedicated to the **god Jagannath**, a form of Vishnu in Hinduism.

b. It is located in **Puri** in the state of Odisha, situated on the eastern coast of India. As per temple records, **King Indradyumna** of Avanti built the main temple of Jagannath at Puri.

c. The temple is famous for its **annual Ratha Yatra**, or chariot festival, in which the three principal deities are pulled on huge and elaborately decorated raths, or temple cars.

d. Unlike the stone and metal icons found in most Hindu temples, the image of Jagannath is made of wood, and is **ceremoniously replaced every 12 or**

19 years by an exact replica.

e. The temple is **sacred to all Hindus**, and especially in those of the Vaishnava traditions. Many great Vaishnava saints, such as Ramanujacharya, Madhvacharya, Nimbarkacharya, Vallabhacharya and Ramananda were closely associated with the temple.

UPSC Syllabus: History

Nalanda

Why in the news?

The New Nalanda University campus was recently inaugurated by the Prime Minister.

About Nalanda



Figure 8. Source: TH

6. Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang spent five years at Nalanda during the reign of Harshavardhan in the 7th century, documenting its rigorous admission tests and scholarly environment.

7. It is recognized as a **celebrated Buddhist site** after Alexander Cunningham identified it based on Hiuen Tsang's travel notes and epigraphic records.

8. A king of Sumatra once requested a Pala king's permission to endow a monastery at Nalanda, highlighting its international connections.

9. Decline and Destruction:

i) It was attacked and ransacked by Bakhtiyar Khalji around 1200 AD, resulting in the destruction of its vast collection of books. Satish Chandra's "History of Medieval India" and Minhaj-i-Siraj's "Tabaqat-i-Nasiri" detail these raids.

ii) Historian D.N. Jha contested claims of Nalanda's destruction, suggesting Bakhtiyar Khalji captured a different fortified monastery, not Nalanda.

1. Nalanda was an **ancient centre of learning and a revered Buddhist site**. It was rediscovered in the 19th century, its history goes back to the Gupta dynasty.

2. It was founded by **Emperor Kumaragupta-I** of the Gupta dynasty around 427 AD.

3. It flourished with the support of the Pala kings and the monks of Nalanda, who were patronized by the Pithipatis of Bodh Gaya.

4. It served as a university where students studied music, Sanskrit, astronomy, yoga, Ayurveda, and philosophy.

5. Nalanda's faculty included renowned names in Hinayana and Mahayana Buddhism, such as **Aryabhata, Harsha, Dharmapala, Nagarjuna, Dharmakirti, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Chandrakirti, and Silabhadra**.

6. Chinese pilgrim Hiuen Tsang spent five

iii) Namit Arora argued that many Buddhist sites were abandoned or converted into Brahminical sites before the Turko-Persian invasions, with Nalanda being rediscovered only in the 19th century.

10. Rediscovery and Revival

i) Nalanda was brought back to public memory in the 19th century.

ii) The new Nalanda University campus was inaugurated at Rajgir, aiming to restore its ancient glory.

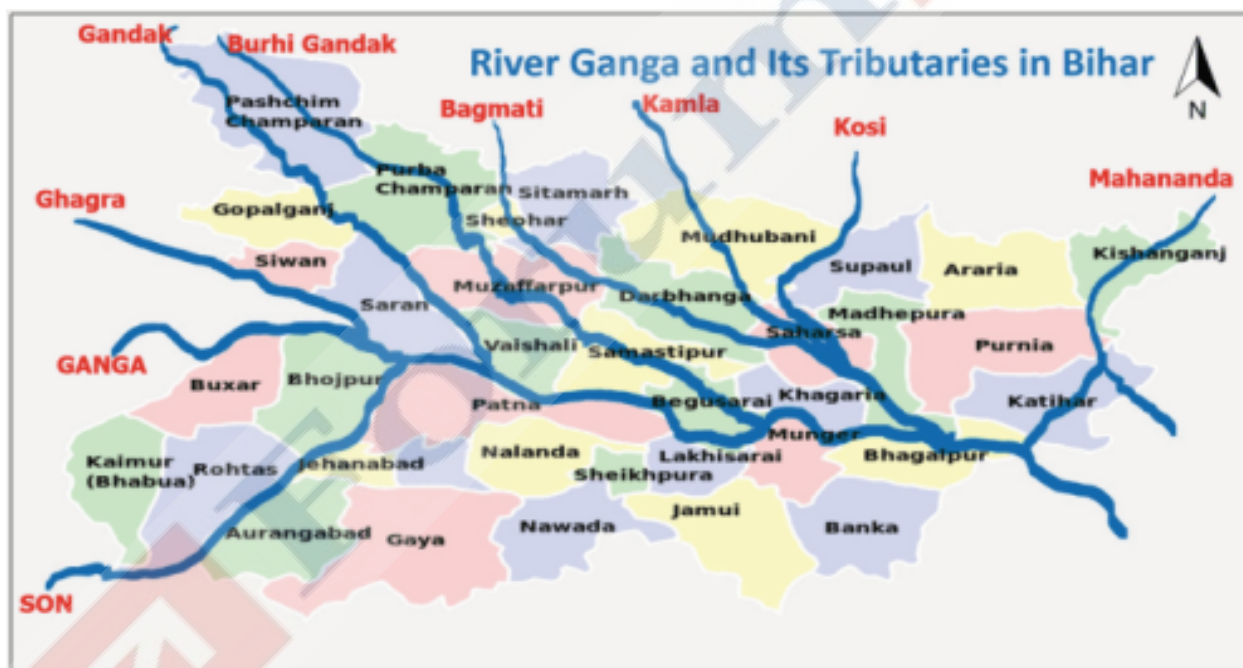
UPSC Syllabus: Geography

Bagmati River

Why in the news?

Recently, a flood situation has emerged in Bihar's Muzaffarpur area due to the rising water levels of the Bagmati River.

About Bagmati River:



Source- Mera Apna Bihar

Aspect	Detail
Location	The Bagmati River flows through south-central Nepal and northern Bihar state, India.
Origin	The river originates from the Bagdwar area in the Shivapuri Hills, located in the northwestern part of Kathmandu Valley.

Course	<p>a. The river flows down from the Kathmandu valley floor and passes through the valley at Chovar.</p> <p>b. It flows southward through the Shivalik Range, the southernmost range of the Himalayas.</p> <p>c. The river continues across the plains of Tarai into Bihar. It then flows southeastward to join the Burhi Gandak River.</p> <p>The total course of the river is 225 miles (360 km). The Bagmati River basin transacts three distinct latitudinal physiographic zones in the Nepal Himalayas- Mountain Zone, Siwalik Zone and Terai Zone.</p>
Religious Significance	<p>The river is considered holy by both Hindus and Buddhists.</p> <p>The banks of the Bagmati River are home to various temples, including the Pashupatinath Temple which is a UNESCO World Heritage Site</p>

UPSC Syllabus: Internal Security

Surge in terror attacks in Jammu

Why in the news?

It has been observed that there has been a surge in terror attacks in Jammu. The rise in attacks highlights gaps in the security infrastructure in regions like Doda, Poonch, and Rajouri, which had seen peace for many years.

Recent Attack Statistics

- i) 2022: Three attacks, six security force personnel killed, 14 militants killed, 11 civilians killed.
- ii) 2023: Three attacks, 21 security force personnel killed, 20 militants killed.
- iii) 2024: Six attacks so far, 11 security force personnel killed, five militants killed, 11 civilians killed.

Factors Contributing to the Surge

1. Complacency and Reduced Proactive Operations

- i) Prolonged peace and a more active focus on the Valley may have led to complacency in counter-insurgency efforts in Jammu.
- ii) Reduction in proactive operations due to lower alertness compared to the Valley.

2. Troop Reduction and Increased Responsibility

- i) Troop reduction in 2021, with forces moved to the Line of Actual Control, increased the area of responsibility for each battalion.
- ii) Approximately 4,000 to 5,000 troops, mostly involved in counter-terror duties, were moved out of the area.

3. Attacks Near International Border

- i) Recent attacks in the Kathua-Samba region indicate a trend of targeting areas close to the International Border.

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ii) These areas fall under the Army Western Command, which does not engage in counter-terror operations, requiring additional troops who need training and familiarization.

4. Strategic Shift by Militants

i) Jammu has become a new focal point for militant operations against security forces, following changes to J&K's constitutional status in 2019 and increased activity in Eastern Ladakh.

ii) Infiltration along the International Border is easier than the Line of Control, with Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba cadres leading attacks.

5. Deployment Patterns and Intelligence Gaps

i) Deployment patterns changed after militancy ebbed in 2007, leading to thin deployments and gaps in intelligence.

ii) Effective border management is crucial to handle increased militant activity and to prevent regrouping of militants in Kashmir.

6. Technology Dependence and Reduced Ground Intelligence

i) Increased reliance on technology has reduced the ground-level connection, impacting operational intelligence.

ii) Efforts are needed to reorient operations towards basic counter-insurgency measures, emphasizing ground intelligence.

7. Lack of Human Intelligence

i) The increase in terror violence is linked to a lack of human intelligence feeding security forces.

ii) Developing these networks will take time, and nearly all recent attacks in Jammu have been carried out by foreign terrorists using dense forest cover for infiltration.

8. Motivational Incentives: The centralization of police powers has delayed motivational incentives for forces, such as promotions, reducing the drive to develop human intelligence.

9. Sophisticated Equipment and Narco-Terrorism

i) Militants are using advanced equipment like night-vision glasses and M4 rifles.

ii) Increased instances of narco-terrorism, facilitated by people and drones, have generated funds for terror activities and local distribution.

iii) Drones transporting drugs, explosives, weapons, and money have been intercepted by security forces.

UPSC Syllabus: Scheme and Programme

The Voicebox" Program

Why in the news?

The **National Film Development Corporation** (NFDC) and **Netflix** India have collaborated to launch an upskilling program for voice-over artists in India, named "The Voicebox."

About The Voicebox” Program



Figure 9.Source: PIB

1. Launched by: National Film Development Corporation (NFDC) and Netflix

2. Partner: Pearl Academy which is India’s leading design institute will join as a training partner for this program.

3. Funding by: The Voicebox program is sponsored by the Netflix Fund for Creative Equity.

4. Objective: The “The Voicebox” program aims to upskill voice-over artists in India.

Features of the programme

1. The program will cover eight languages: English, Hindi, Marathi, Bengali, Malayalam, Tamil, Telugu, and Gujarati. The training will include Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) workshops, featuring guest lectures and mentoring sessions, followed by assessments.
2. The workshops will be conducted in seven major cities: New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Hyderabad, Chennai, and Kochi.
3. Each batch will accommodate up to 30 candidates, with a total of 210 participants selected through preliminary screening. At least 50% of the participants will be women.
4. The top seven participants from each batch will have the opportunity to contribute to Netflix’s special project, “Azaadi ki Amrit Kahaniya.” They will lend their voices to narrate stories reflecting the Indian independence movement.
5. The program is open to professionals with more than two years of experience in the media and entertainment sector, with a preference for women. The goal is to enhance their skills in voice-over artistry.
6. Netflix has committed \$100 million a year over five years to support underrepresented communities in the TV and film industries through various programs globally.