Factly Weekly

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For UPSC CSE Prelims Exam

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INDEX

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Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (IGC)

News: India to host the 20th session of the UNESCO Intergovernmental Committee for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage from 8 to 13 December 2025 in New Delhi.

About Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (IGC)

Source: PIB

- The Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (IGC) was established under the framework of the 2003 UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.
- Elections for the Committee are held during the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention, ensuring equitable geographical representation and rotation of members.
- The Committee consists of 24 elected representatives from the States Parties to the Convention.
    - Currently, India is one of the 24 Member States, serving on the Committee.
- Term of office: States Members to the Committee are elected for a term of four years, and every two years, the General Assembly shall renew half of them.
    - A State Member of the Committee may not be elected for two consecutive terms.
- Bureau Members
    - Chairperson: Ambassador, Permanent Delegate of the Republic of India to UNESCO
    - Vice-Chairpersons: France, Slovakia, Barbados, Ethiopia, and Mauritania
    - Rapporteur: Ms. Aysha Kamali, United Arab Emirates
- Functions:
    - Promotes and Monitors the Objectives of the 2003 Convention: The committee actively works to promote the principles and objectives of the 2003 Convention for safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.
        - It monitors the effective implementation of the Convention's principles across different Member States.
    - Provides Guidance and Recommendations: The committee guides States Parties on best practices for the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage.
    - Oversees the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund: It prepares and submits the draft plan for the use of the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund to the General Assembly.
    - Drafts Operational Directives: The committee drafts and proposes operational directives for the implementation of the 2003 Convention, ensuring practical application across Member States.

- Examines Reports from States Parties: The committee examines the periodic reports submitted by States Parties, reviewing their progress in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage.
- Evaluates Requests from States Parties: The committee evaluates various requests from States Parties related to the safeguarding of intangible cultural heritage, including: Inscription of cultural elements on the UNESCO ICH Lists (as per Articles 16, 17, and 18) and granting of international assistance to help preserve intangible cultural heritage.

Hoolock Gibbon

News: A family of stranded Hoolock gibbons was rescued following a difficult four-day operation in Horu Pahar village, located in the Lower Dibang Valley district of Arunachal Pradesh.

About Hoolock Gibbon


Source – Wikipedia

- Hoolock gibbons are primates and fall under the category of apes, which are evolutionarily closest to humans.
- It is also known as the White-Browed Gibbon.
- Scientific name: *Bunopithecus hoolock*.
- They are the only ape species found in India.
- Habitat: They thrive in tropical semi-deciduous and tropical deciduous forest.
  - They prefer to live in three-tier canopies (high, middle, and low), which offer shelter, food, and suitable trees for movement.
- Distribution: The Hoolock gibbon is found in northeast India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and southern China.
  - In India, it inhabits the regions south of the Brahmaputra River, including states such as Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur, and Tripura.
  - According to Zoologists, Northeast of India houses two species of the ape — the eastern hoolock gibbon (Hoolock leuconedys) found in a specific region of Arunachal Pradesh and the western hoolock gibbon (Hoolock hoolock) distributed elsewhere in the Northeast.
- It is considered a keystone species, meaning its presence is vital for the health of the ecosystem
- Physical Characteristics

- It exhibits sexual dichromatism: Adult males have black coats with prominent white eyebrows, while adult females have a golden, buff, or brownish coat.
- Size and Weight: The head and body length ranges from 45.7–63.0 cm, and the weight of males is between 6.1–7.9 kg, while females weigh between 6.0–6.6 kg.
- Hoolock gibbons are known for their territorial songs, which are loud, elaborate duets sung by both males and females.

- Diet: The Hoolock gibbon is primarily frugivorous, feeding on fruits, leaves, flowers, tender buds, and insects.
- Threats: The Hoolock gibbon faces significant threats due to habitat fragmentation, largely caused by deforestation and agricultural activities like jhuming.
  - Poaching for meat and medicinal purposes is a major threat to the species.

National Song (Vande Mataram)

News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi initiated a discussion in the Lok Sabha to mark the 150th anniversary of the National Song, Vande Mataram.

About National Song (Vande Mataram)

Source – NewsOnAir

- Composition: Vande Mataram was originally composed in Sanskrit by *Bankimchandra Chatterjee* and included in his novel *Anand Math (1882).*
- First Sung: The song was first sung at the *1896 session of the Indian National Congress in Calcutta* by *Rabindranath Tagore.*
- Adoption: On *24 January 1950*, the Constituent Assembly officially adopted it as the National Song of India.
- Constitutional Aspect: Although *Article 51A(a)* of the Constitution enjoins citizens to respect the Constitution, its ideals and institutions, the National Flag, and the National Anthem, it does not make specific mention of the National Song.
- Difference between National Anthem and National Song
  - The National Anthem enjoys specific constitutional privileges and legal protection. According to Article 51A(a) of the Constitution of India, it is the fundamental duty of every citizen to respect the National Anthem.
  - Violations of this respect can lead to penalties, as outlined in the Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971.

- The Orders relating to the National Anthem regulate the correct manner in which the Anthem should be played or sung.
- The National Song, on the other hand, does not have such explicit legal protection in the Constitution.
    - While it holds national significance, it is not subject to the same detailed set of regulations and punishments as the National Anthem.

Washington Accords for Peace and Prosperity

News: The Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda recently signed the Washington Accords for Peace and Prosperity during a meeting hosted by President Donald J. Trump.

About Washington Accords for Peace and Prosperity

Source – US State Deptt.

- The Democratic Republic of the Congo–Rwanda peace agreement is officially known as the Washington Accords for Peace and Prosperity.
- Signed on: It was signed on December 4, 2025, in Washington, D.C.
- Facilitated by: The Accords were officially facilitated by the U.S.A.
- The Washington Accords for Peace and Prosperity is a instrument that reinforces commitments to end decades of conflict, promote cooperation, and build lasting peace between the DRC and Rwanda.
- The agreement also aims to achieve the vision of the Regional Economic Integration Framework (REIF) to create a bold roadmap for peace, security, and unprecedented economic growth.
- Background: It builds on preliminary deals from June 2025, mediated by the US, Qatar, and the African Union, aiming to end decades-long conflict in eastern DRC involving Rwandan-backed M23 rebels and Congolese-supported FDLR militia.

About Regional Economic Integration Framework (REIF)

- The DRC and Rwanda signed the Regional Economic Integration Framework (REIF).
- It is a bilateral initiative that unlocks the vast economic potential of the Great Lakes region and creates opportunities for the U.S. private sector.

Key Facts about Benin

News: Recently, Benin's President Patrice Talon addressed citizens after forces in Cotonou foiled a coup attempt by soldiers called the Military Committee for Refoundation.

Key Facts about Benin

Source – Britannica

- Location: Benin is a country in western Africa that extends northward from the Gulf of Guinea to the Niger River.
- Capital: The official capital is Porto-Novo, while Cotonou is the largest city, chief port, and de facto administrative capital.
- Boundaries
    - Land boundaries: Benin is bordered by Nigeria to the east, Togo to the west, Burkina Faso to the northwest, and Niger to the northeast.
    - Maritime boundary: It has a coastline on the Bight of Benin, which is part of the Gulf of Guinea in the Atlantic Ocean.
- Climate: It features tropical savanna climate.
- Important Rivers: The Niger River and its tributaries drain the northeast, while the Mono, Couffo and Ouémé are the main southern rivers.
- Relief Features
    - Barre Country: The barre country is a fertile clay plateau that includes the large swampy Lama Marsh and has mostly flat land with occasional hills rising to about 1,300 feet.
    - Benin Plateaus: The Benin plateaus consist of four plateaus (Abomey, Kétou, Aplahoué, and Zagnanado) made of clays over a crystalline base.
    - Atakora Mountains: The Atakora Mountains in the northwest form a continuation of the Togo Mountains.

United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

News: The political battle over the UN Environment Programme's (UNEP) Medium-Term Strategy (MTS) will dominate the opening of the seventh UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-7) in Nairobi.

About United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)

Source – UNEP

- UNEP is the UN's leading global authority on environmental issues, focusing on addressing the triple planetary crisis: climate change, nature, land and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste.
- Founded in: 1972
- It serves as a neutral convener of governments, civil society, private sector, and UN agencies to address global environmental challenges.
- Mission: To provide leadership and encourage partnership in caring for the environment by inspiring, informing, and enabling nations and peoples to improve their quality of life without compromising that of future generations.
- Governed by: United Nations Environment Assembly (UNEA), the highest-level decision-making body on the environment.
- Membership: 193 Member States. UNEP collaborates with a wide range of partners, including Member States, private sector, UN agencies, NGOs, and civil society to tackle environmental challenges.
- Headquarters: Nairobi, Kenya
- Funding: UNEP relies on voluntary contributions for more than 95% of its funding, including contributions from Member States, the private sector, global funds, and UN agencies.
    - UNEP's core funding comes from the Environment Fund, which is exclusively financed by Member States.
    - It manages three Planetary Funds: UNEP Climate Fund, UNEP Nature Fund and UNEP Pollution Fund
- Function:
    - Catalyzing Global Action: UNEP promotes solutions to the triple planetary crisis (climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution) and drives global environmental action.
    - Promoting Sustainability: UNEP encourages sustainable practices to help humanity live in harmony with nature, supporting the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
    - Scientific Research and Advocacy: UNEP conducts scientific research, provides policy advice, and advocates for environmental change to influence global decision-making.
    - Leadership in Environmental Agreements: UNEP leads global efforts on key issues such as climate change, deforestation, and ozone layer protection through international agreements.

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- Partnerships and Capacity Building: UNEP fosters global partnerships, mobilizes funding, and provides technical support to countries and organizations to enhance environmental governance and sustainability.

- Reports Published by UNEP
  - Emissions Gap Report
  - Adaptation Gap Report
  - Global Environment Outlook (GEO) Report
  - Frontiers Report
  - Global Chemicals Outlook
  - Global Waste Management Outlook

Fonio (Digitaria exilis) and Sikiya (Digitaria sanguilanis)

News: Fonio and Sikiya are discussed because both are wild millets valued by rural and tribal communities but face different levels of recognition.

About Fonio (Digitaria exilis)


Source – DTE

- Location: Fonio is an ancient and widely cultivated cereal in the dry savannas of West Africa (e.g., Guinea, Nigeria, Senegal).
- Properties
  - It is known as one of the world's fastest-growing cereals, maturing in as little as 6 to 8 weeks.
  - It is highly valued for its ability to grow in poor, semi-arid soils where other cereals fail.
- Nutrient Value
  - It is rich in protein, iron, zinc, magnesium, vitamin B6, fibre, calcium, copper, and folate, and contains amino acids such as methionine and cysteine.
  - It is gluten-free and has a low glycemic index.
- Significance: It has potential to improve nutrition, boost food security, and support sustainable land use in climate-vulnerable regions.

About Sikiya (Digitaria sanguinalis)

- Sikiya is a wild millet from the crabgrass family that grows in the Dindori district of Madhya Pradesh.

- It is also called the Polish millet, as farmers in Poland grow and eat this millet and use it as fodder, and it is also grown in Germany.
- Grain appearance: In appearance, its grains—light yellow in colour—are smaller than those of little millets. "It is more filling than rice
- Community preference: It is a favourite food of the Baiga tribe.
- Growth and cultivation pattern: Sikiya grows naturally in traditional bewar cultivation, which is a slash-and-burn farming method.
    - It re-grows from its rootstock during the monsoon because this system allows natural regeneration.
- Status in Official Promotion: It does not even feature in the list of millets being promoted by the Centre as "nutri cereals".

Key Similarities Between Both

- Both are wild millets from the crabgrass family and serve as preferred foods for rural and tribal communities.
- Both are climate-resilient grains that support local food security.
- Both highlight the importance of preserving indigenous food systems through local cultivation and seed conservation.

Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay

News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks on the 150th anniversary of Vande Mataram highlighted how Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay's powerful song became a rallying cry for India's freedom movement against British colonial rule.

About Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay


Source: news18.com

- Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay was born on June 27, 1838, in North 24 Parganas, Bengal, into a family with strong intellectual roots.
- Early life: He became one of the first two graduates of the newly established Calcutta University in 1858, earning degrees in arts and law. Following his graduation, he joined the colonial administration as a deputy collector in Jessore.
- Literary Contribution: Bankim initially wrote in English, but he soon switched to Bengali, believing that a national awakening in India could only be achieved through a language connected to the people.

- His early novels Durgeshnandini (1865) and Kapalkundala (1866) were successful and established him as a significant voice in Bengali literature.
- In 1872, Bankim founded the literary journal Bangadarshan, which played a crucial role in the Bengal Renaissance.
- Bankim's novel Anandamath, published in 1882, was inspired by the Sanyasi–Fakir rebellion of the 18th century.
- The poem Vande Mataram, embedded in Anandamath, became a rallying cry for India's independence movement.
- It was banned by the British, but Vande Mataram spread rapidly and became a symbol of resistance.

- Role in India's National Movement
  - Vande Mataram became an anthem for the Swadeshi movement during the 1905 partition of Bengal, symbolizing unity and national pride.
  - The poem was popularized by Rabindranath Tagore, who set it to music, and was later adopted as India's national song by the Constituent Assembly in 1951.
- Cultural and Intellectual Influence
  - Bankim was a cultural critic who rejected the colonial portrayal of India's history, arguing that India's legacy could not be defined by invaders or foreign rulers.
  - He sought to revive India's indigenous traditions and believed that Eastern and Western ideas could coexist without erasing India's cultural foundations.
- Philosophical Views
  - Bankim believed that India's identity was rooted in its civilisational heritage, not just political boundaries. He emphasized the importance of a shared memory, language, and devotion to the motherland.
  - He viewed Vande Mataram as a way to unite Indians emotionally and create a collective national identity, transcending regional, caste, and class divisions.
- Legacy and Recognition
  - Bankim's contributions to Bengali literature earned him the title of Sahitya Samrat (Emperor of Bengali Literature).
  - His works, including Anandamath, continued to influence generations of writers and thinkers, and were later adapted into films and other media.
- Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay passed away on April 8, 1894, at the age of 55.

Indian Constituent Assembly

News: On 9 December 2025, the nation marks the 79th anniversary of the first meeting of India's Constituent Assembly, a historic moment that laid the foundation for the Indian Republic.

About Indian Constituent Assembly

- The Constituent Assembly was created in 1946 through the British Cabinet Mission Plan.
- It was tasked with drafting the Constitution for independent India, as part of the anti-colonial freedom movement.
- Origin: The concept of a Constituent Assembly was first proposed by M.N. Roy in 1934, long before India gained independence.
    - It gained momentum when the Indian National Congress officially demanded it in 1935.
    - The British government eventually agreed to the demand in the August Offer of 1940, and the Cabinet Mission Plan of 1946 further detailed the structure of the Assembly.
- The Constituent Assembly first convened on 9 December 1946, marking the beginning of the journey to create a free and democratic India.
- Composition: The Constituent Assembly initially had 389 members as per the Cabinet Mission Plan. 296 members were from the provinces and 93 were from the princely states.
    - Following the Partition in 1947, the Assembly's membership reduced to 299. 229 members represented the 12 British Indian provinces.
    - 70 members represented the Princely States and 6 members represented backward tribes.
- Allocation of seats in the Constituent Assembly: Seats were allocated based on population and community, ensuring representation for different groups, including Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, and others.
- Notable Members: Dr. Rajendra Prasad was elected President of the Constituent Assembly.
    - Dr. B.R. Ambedkar played the most crucial role as Chairman of the Drafting Committee.
    - Other significant leaders included Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, K.M. Munshi, and Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar.
    - 15 women members, including Hansa Mehta, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, and Dakshayani Velayudhan.

- Dominated by upper-caste members, but also had significant Dalit representation, notably B.R. Ambedkar and others like S. Nagappa and Dakshayani Velayudhan (the only Dalit woman in the Assembly).
- Political Affiliation: Around 80% of members were elected on a Congress ticket.
- The Assembly had members from across the political spectrum, including socialists like K.T. Shah, conservatives like Syama Prasad Mookerjee (Hindu Mahasabha), and liberals like Minoo Masani.

- How were the members of the Constituent Assembly elected?
  - Members were indirectly elected by the Provincial Legislative Assemblies, which had been elected under the Government of India Act, 1935.
  - The election was conducted using proportional representation through the single transferable vote system.
- Duration and Sessions: The Constituent Assembly first convened on 9 December 1946. It took 2 years and 11 months to draft the Constitution, with 11 sessions and a total of 166 days of deliberations.
- Committees and Plenary Sessions: The drafting of the Constitution occurred at two levels:
  - Committees: Smaller groups tasked with drafting specific sections of the Constitution.
  - Plenary Sessions: The full Assembly met to discuss the reports of various committees, propose and vote on amendments.
- Adoption of the Constitution: The Constitution of India, 1950 was adopted after extensive deliberations and amendments.

Charaichung Royal Bird Sanctuary

News: The Charaichung Festival was organised on Majuli Island in Assam to revive and conserve the nearly defunct Royal Bird Sanctuary and promote its global recognition.

About Charaichung Royal Bird Sanctuary

Source – Northeast Live

- Charaichung Royal Bird Sanctuary is Asia's first protected bird sanctuary.
- Established in: It was established in 1633 AD by Ahom king Swargadeu Pratap Singha.
- Location: It is located in Majuli, world's largest river island (inside Brahmaputra River), in state of Assam.
- Ecological Significance: It holds nearly 150 varieties of indigenous and migratory birds, making their protection and conservation extremely important.

About Charaichung Festival

- The festival is organised by a Majuli-based non-governmental organisation (NGO) "Majulir Sahitya" and people from the local community.
- Aim: The festival aims to place Charaichung on the global map, restore its bird habitat, and promote it as a tourism destination.

About Majuli Island

- Location: Majuli Island is located on the Brahmaputra River in Assam.
- It is the largest river island in the world.
- It is formed by the Subansiri River in the north and the Brahmaputra River in the south.
- Tribes: Majuli is home to three main tribes: Mishing, Deori, and Sonowal Kachari.

Note: For more information on Majuli Island read this article here

Miyako Strait

News: Japan has scrambled jets to monitor Russian and Chinese air forces conducting joint patrols around the Miyako Strait, amid rising tensions between Tokyo and Beijing.

About Miyako Strait

Source – Strait Times

- Location: The Miyako Strait is a 250 km-wide maritime passage of international waters and airspace between Miyako Island and Okinawa Island in Japan's Ryukyu archipelago.
- It is also known as the Kerama Gap.
- It is the widest strait in the Ryukyu Islands.
- Connecting: It is connecting the East China Sea with the Pacific (Philippine Sea).
- It is vital for freedom of navigation, maritime security, and monitoring naval movements in the Indo-Pacific region.
- Geopolitical significance
    - It provides a deep, navigable route from the East China Sea to the open Pacific.
    - It is one of the few international waterways for China's People's Liberation Army Navy to access the Pacific Ocean from the East China Sea.

- In news: It has become an issue between Japan and China

Pass-Through Tax Status

News: Asset reconstruction companies (ARCs) have urged the government to extend pass-through tax status to alternative investment funds (AIFs) investing in security receipts (SRs).

About Pass-Through Tax Status

Source – ET

- Pass-through status is a tax rule where the business or fund itself does not pay corporation tax on its income.
- Normally, the same income can be taxed twice – once as corporation tax at the firm level and again when it is received by shareholders or investors.
- Working mechanism: Under pass-through status, the income generated by the fund (Pass-Through Entities) is taxed only in the hands of the investor, and the fund (Pass-Through Entities) does not pay tax on that same income.
- Purpose: This system is used so that income is not taxed twice – it avoids tax at both the fund level and again at the investor level for the same amount.
- Examples of Pass-Through Entities: Examples include sole proprietorships, S corporations, master limited partnerships, limited liability partnerships, and limited liability companies.
- Indian Context:
    - In 2014, the Union Budget allowed Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs), which are pooled vehicles for investing in real estate, to have pass-through status.
    - Asset Reconstruction Companies (ARCs) are currently subjected to a steep 42.74% maximum marginal tax on income from Security Receipts (SRs) at the fund level.
    - This high tax rate is viewed as a deterrent to investment in ARC trusts.

Global Environment Outlook (GEO)

News: The UN Environment Programme (UNEP) has released the seventh edition of its flagship Global Environment Outlook (GEO).

About Global Environment Outlook (GEO)

Source – UNEP

- The Global Environment Outlook (GEO) evaluates the state of the global environment and identifies emerging risks and sustainability pathways.
- Released by: United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- GEO synthesizes multidisciplinary scientific research from experts worldwide to provide policymakers with actionable insights for addressing climate change, biodiversity loss, pollution, and other environmental challenges.
- 2025 Edition: It is the 7th edition of GEO.
- Key Findings
    - Climate change, biodiversity loss, land degradation, pollution, and waste: These are escalating simultaneously across the planet, collectively pushing the world into "uncharted territory."
    - Unsustainable Production and Consumption are the Root Cause: These unsustainable systems undermine human well-being and result in trillions of dollars in annual economic losses.
    - Environmental Degradation Has High Economic Costs: The loss of ecosystem services, increasing climate impacts, and pollution-related health burdens significantly reduce global economic productivity.
    - Transformation Is Technically and Economically Feasible: Such a transformation could generate approximately USD 20 trillion per year by 2070 and up to USD 100 trillion per year in the long term.
    - Current Policy Actions Are Insufficient: The report concludes that incremental changes will not be enough to reverse ongoing environmental decline.
    - Global Inequalities Amplify Environmental Pressures: Access to clean energy, clean water, and sustainable food remains deeply uneven across countries and communities.
    - Need for Stronger, Integrated Action: The findings demonstrate that global environmental pressures require stronger, integrated, and coordinated action to prevent further ecological and socio-economic harm.
- Key Recommendations
    - Transform Economic and Financial Systems
    - Accelerate Circular Economy Transitions

- Rapid Decarbonization of the Energy System
- Transform Food and Land-Use Systems
- Protect and Restore Ecosystems and Biodiversity
- Advance Integrated, Whole-of-Society Approaches
- Regional Customization of Solutions

UNESCO's inscription of Deepavali on the Intangible Cultural Heritage list

News: India's Deepavali festival has been added to UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

About UNESCO's inscription of Deepavali on the Intangible Cultural Heritage list

Source: Livemint

- UNESCO has inscribed India's nomination for Deepavali (Diwali), the "festival of light," onto the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity for 2025.
- This decision was taken during a key meeting of UNESCO held at the Red Fort in New Delhi.
- The inscription follows earlier recognitions such as Garba from Gujarat and Durga Puja from West Bengal.
- Implications of the Inscription for Deepavali:
  - The inscription enhances the international recognition and status of Deepavali as a living cultural expression.
  - UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee provides guidance on best practices, recommends measures for safeguarding the tradition, and mobilises resources through the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund.
  - The recognition is expected to strengthen cultural exchanges, boost tourism, and enhance the festival's global visibility.
  - The listing also supports sustainable livelihoods, especially for artisans who help keep Diwali's traditions alive.
  - India's pitch for Diwali's inclusion also aims to reach the Indian diaspora, reinforcing cultural ties across borders.

About Intangible Cultural Heritage

- Intangible Cultural Heritage refers to living traditions, skills, and expressions passed down through generations.

- Unlike tangible heritage such as monuments or archaeological sites, intangible heritage comprises oral traditions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festivals, nature-related knowledge, and traditional craftsmanship.
- These elements are valued because they strengthen cultural identity, diversity, and community continuity.
- India's Current Presence on the List
    - UNESCO's Intangible Cultural Heritage List currently contains around 700 elements from 140 countries.
    - With the addition of Deepavali, India now has 16 elements included on the list.
    - India's existing inscriptions include Kumbh Mela, Durga Puja of Kolkata, Garba of Gujarat, yoga, the Vedic chanting tradition, and Ramleela.
- Criteria for an Element to Be Listed
    - UNESCO requires intangible cultural heritage elements to be inclusive, representative, and community-based in order to qualify for listing.
    - The organisation emphasizes that such practices should express shared identity and collective memory.
    - A noted example is UNESCO's earlier inclusion of the "artisanal know-how and culture of baguette bread" as an element representing France's daily ritual and cultural conviviality.
    - UNESCO underscores the urgency of safeguarding diverse social histories in a globalised and conflict-ridden world, especially those at high risk.

Note: To know more about Intangible heritage list, click here

Penguins

News: New scientific research has revealed that the overexploitation of sardines off southern Africa directly contributed to the deaths of more than 60,000 African penguins.

About Penguins


Source: eBird

- Penguins are flightless marine birds that belong to the order Sphenisciformes.
- They consist of approximately 18–21 species that inhabit only the Southern Hemisphere.
- Most penguin species live between 45° and 60° south latitude rather than in Antarctica.
- The Galapagos penguin is the only penguin species that lives at the Equator.
- Physical Characteristics
    - Penguins have stocky bodies and short legs that make them well adapted for swimming rather than flying.

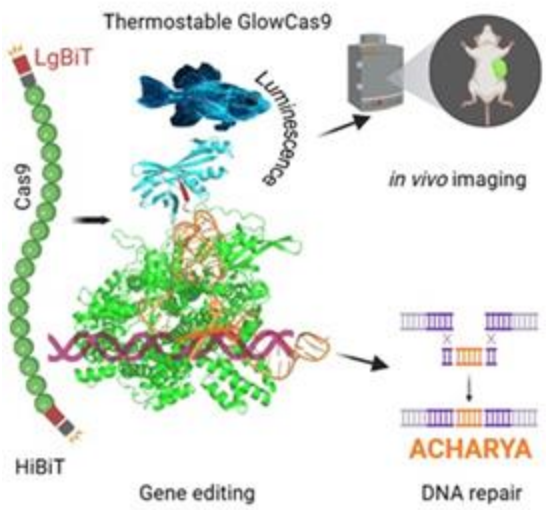
- Their height ranges from about 35 cm in the small blue penguin to 115 cm in the emperor penguin.
- Their weight ranges from about 1 kg in small species to as much as 40 kg in the emperor penguin.
- Penguins are typically black on their backs and white on their bellies, which provides effective aquatic camouflage.
- Some penguin species display additional colors such as red or yellow eyes, red feet, yellow eyebrow tufts, or orange patches.

- Adaptations:
  - Penguins use their flipper-like wings to propel themselves efficiently through the water.
  - Their dense feathers and thick layers of fat help them to maintain body heat in cold marine environments.
  - Many penguins can dive to significant depths, with emperor penguins diving as deep as 550 metres.
- Diet: They primarily feed on krill, fish, and squid found in marine ecosystems.
- Notable Species:
  - The emperor penguin is the largest penguin species and is known for breeding during Antarctica's harsh winter.
  - The king penguin has vibrant orange markings and forms large breeding colonies.
  - Rockhopper penguins are recognized by their red eyes, yellow eyebrow feathers, and distinctive head crests.
  - Royal penguins form one of the world's largest colonies on Macquarie Island but remain vulnerable due to their restricted breeding range.
- Threat: Climate change poses a major threat to penguins by altering sea ice patterns and reducing food availability.
  - Overfishing by humans can diminish the fish stocks that penguins depend on for survival.

GlowCas9

News: Indian scientists have created a glowing CRISPR protein that can be observed in action within living cells. It is a groundbreaking development that could greatly enhance cancer treatment and other gene-based therapies.

About GlowCas9



- GlowCas9 is a new CRISPR protein created by scientists at the Bose Institute in Kolkata.
- It is engineered to produce light during gene editing, enabling scientists to track the process inside living cells.
- Mechanism of Action:
    - It is a bioluminescent version of the Cas9 protein, developed by fusing Cas9 with a split nano-luciferase enzyme derived from deep-sea shrimp.
    - These nano-luciferase enzyme pieces are inactive until Cas9 folds correctly.
    - When the pieces come into proximity, they reassemble, restoring enzymatic activity and producing a visible light signal, similar to the glow of fireflies.
- Advantages of GlowCas9:
    - It provides a way to observe gene editing in real-time without harming cells.
    - The bioluminescence allows tracking of the gene-editing process in living cells, tissues, and even plant leaves.
    - GlowCas9 is more stable than conventional Cas9 and can maintain its structure and activity at higher temperatures. This increased stability is important for gene therapy, ensuring effective delivery of the Cas9 protein for treatment.
- Application:
    - Gene Therapy Implications: GlowCas9 can aid in gene therapy by improving the precision of homology-directed repair (HDR), which is essential for fixing hereditary mutations linked to diseases like sickle cell anemia and muscular dystrophy.
    - Applications in Crop Improvement: The technology is also applicable to plant systems, suggesting potential non-transgenic applications in crop improvement.

National Hub for Quantum Communication

News: The Indian Institute of Technology, Madras (IITM), launched the IITM C-DOT Samgnya Technologies Foundation, which will serve as India's National Hub for Quantum Communication.

About the National Hub for Quantum Communication

Source: Communicationstoday

- The National Hub for Quantum Communication was established under the IITM C-DOT Samgnya Technologies Foundation.
- The Foundation is located at the IIT Madras Research Park.
- Objectives: The Foundation will lead India's efforts in quantum secure communication technologies and their deployment.
- Key Focus: Its key focus areas include:
    - Quantum Cryptography and Post-Quantum Security
    - Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) Networks
    - Quantum Memory and Repeaters
    - Satellite-based Quantum Communication
- Collaboration and Partnerships: The initiative will foster collaboration between academia, industry, and global partners to advance research and implementation in quantum communication.
- Expectations and Goals: The Foundation aims to develop cutting-edge technologies and products within five years, positioning India as a leader in quantum secure communications.
    - The focus will be on practical implementations, including pilot deployments of quantum communication technologies.
    - The establishment of the National Hub for Quantum Communication underscores India's commitment to becoming a global leader in quantum technologies, particularly in secure communication systems.

About National Quantum Mission

- The National Quantum Mission aims to advance quantum computing, quantum communication, quantum sensing and metrology, and quantum materials.
- It seeks to build a strong national ecosystem encompassing research and development, infrastructure creation, startup enablement, and human-resource development.
- The Mission aligns with India's national goals of technological self-reliance, strategic capability building, and global leadership in critical and emerging technologies.

Project Suncatcher

News: Google announced Project Suncatcher, which aims to launch AI chips into space via solar-powered satellites.

About Project Suncatcher

Source: medium.com

- Project SunCatcher is Google's initiative to move AI computation from Earth into orbit using satellite-based compute clusters.
- Aim: The project aims to address the rising energy demands of AI systems by leveraging the Sun's abundant and uninterrupted energy in space.
- Partnerships: Google will launch two prototype satellites in partnership with Planet Labs, an Earth imaging company, by early 2027.
- Features of the project:
    - The project will use satellites with advanced technology to scale AI computations.
    - Google proposes deploying satellites equipped with solar panels and Trillium TPUs to create distributed data centres in low-Earth orbit.
    - These satellites would use direct solar energy in space, eliminating the limitations caused by night cycles, weather, and atmospheric interference on Earth.
    - The system envisions approximately eighty satellites flying in a tight one-kilometre formation to maintain high-bandwidth communication links.
    - Satellite Payload: Each satellite would carry solar arrays, compute hardware, and optical laser communication systems to form a cohesive processing network.
    - Laser Communication: Communication between satellites would occur via free-space lasers using Dense Wavelength Division Multiplexing, allowing data transfer rates of up to ten terabits per second per link.
    - Formation Control: Machine-learning-based control systems may assist in keeping satellite clusters stable despite gravitational and atmospheric disturbances.
- Advantages:
    - Climate Concerns: Earth-bound data centers contribute to water depletion and high energy usage, increasing environmental impact.
    - Power Outages & Natural Disasters: Space offers more predictable climate conditions, free from issues like power outages or natural disasters.

- Data Sovereignty: Space offers a solution for data processing restrictions, with the UN's Outer Space Treaty protecting space from national ownership, allowing international data center hosting.

- Challenges:
  - High Costs: Building and maintaining space-based data centres will be expensive.
  - Data Speed: Moon-based centers will have delayed communication due to the distance from Earth, affecting real-time operations.
  - Cybersecurity: Ensuring the security of space data centres is a key concern.
  - Thermal Challenge: Significant engineering challenges remain, including dissipating heat from TPUs in a vacuum where air-based cooling is impossible.
  - Downlink Difficulty: Ground-to-space communication poses additional hurdles, as laser downlinks must overcome atmospheric effects such as clouds, turbulence, and weather variability.
  - Maintenance Limitations: Maintenance represents another difficult problem because hardware failures that are easily addressed on Earth become far more complex in orbital environments.

UN Champions of the Earth award

News-Tamil Nadu IAS officer Supriya Sahu has received the UN Champions of the Earth Award for her leadership in tackling plastic pollution and promoting wildlife conservation in India.

About UN Champions of the Earth award


Source- NOA

- It is the United Nations' highest environmental honour.
- It was established in 2005 and awarded annually by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- The award recognises individuals and organisations at the forefront of protecting people and the planet.
- It honours innovative and sustainable solutions addressing the triple planetary crisis:
  - Climate change
  - Nature and biodiversity loss
  - Pollution and waste

Convention against Discrimination in Education

News– UNESCO released a report titled Right to Education: Past, Present and Future, which reviews the progress and impact of the 1960 UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education.

About Convention against Discrimination in Education

- It was adopted in 1960 under the aegis of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
- It is the first legally binding international treaty devoted exclusively to the right to education.
- The Convention recognises education as a fundamental human right and places clear responsibilities on States to ensure:
    - Free and compulsory primary education
    - Accessible and available secondary education for all
    - Equal access to higher education, based on individual merit and capacity
    - It prohibits discrimination in education in all its forms.
- India has not ratified this Convention.

India's 1st Hydrogen Fuel Cell Passenger Vessel

News– India has inaugurated its first fully indigenous hydrogen fuel cell–based passenger vessel in Varanasi, signifying an important milestone in the country's push towards green maritime transportation.


Source- PIB

About India's 1st Hydrogen Fuel Cell Passenger Vessel

- The vessel has been constructed by Cochin Shipyard Limited and is owned by the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI).
- It operates on a hydrogen fuel-cell system using Proton Exchange Membrane (PEM) technology, a critical component of India's clean energy and green mobility efforts.
    - Proton Exchange Membrane Fuel Cells (PEMFCs) produce electricity through an electrochemical reaction between hydrogen and oxygen, without any combustion, ensuring high efficiency and zero emissions.

Significance

- The initiative contributes to India's net-zero emissions target by 2070 and is in line with the Maritime India Vision 2030 and Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision 2047.

- The vessel enables silent and pollution-free transport, helps ease pressure on road networks, encourages tourism, and highlights India's capability in developing indigenous green technologies for sustainable inland waterways.

INAS 335 (Ospreys)

News: The Indian Navy will commission its second MH-60R helicopter squadron, INAS 335, on 17 December 2025 at INS Hansa, Goa.

About INAS 335 (Ospreys)

Source – PIB

- INAS 335" primarily refers to the Indian Naval Air Squadron 335, nicknamed the "Ospreys" which is the Indian Navy's second squadron of MH-60R multi-role helicopters.
- Built by: The MH-60R helicopter is built by the United States company Lockheed Martin.
- Based at: The squadron will be based at INS Hansa, Goa.
- Role: The MH-60R serves as the principal ship-borne anti-submarine and multi-role maritime helicopter of the Indian Navy.
- Key Features
    - The helicopter is equipped with advanced weapons, sensors, and an avionics suite, which makes it a versatile and capable naval aviation asset.
    - These systems provide enhanced capability to address both conventional threats and asymmetric threats in the maritime domain.
    - Significance: The commissioning of INAS 335 will provide a significant boost to the Indian Navy's integral aviation capabilities and modernisation efforts.
- First Commission: The first operational MH-60R squadron, INAS 334 known as the Seahawks, was commissioned at INS Garuda, Kochi, in March 2024.

Zambezi River

News: A new study suggests that the Zambezi River, Africa's fourth-longest, is 11% longer than previously thought, with its most distant source lying in Angola, not Zambia.

About Zambezi River

Source – Britannica

- The Zambezi River is the fourth-longest river in Africa (after Nile, Congo, Niger) and continent's longest east-flowing stream.
- Origin: It starts off in a shallow depression in Angola's southern highlands, at the source of a river called the Lungwebungu.
    - Earlier, it was believed to begin its journey from a marshy bog near Mwinilunga in northwestern Zambia at 1,500 m elevation.
- Length: It has a new total length of 3,421 km or 342 km longer than previously thought.
- Countries covered: It flows through Angola, Zambia, Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, and Mozambique.
- Tributaries: The main tributaries of the Zambezi River include the Shire, Kafue, Luangwa, Kabompo, and Cuando (Kwando) rivers.
- Waterfalls: The river is known for several notable waterfalls, including Victoria Falls, one of the world's largest waterfalls, and the Chavuma Falls on the Zambia-Angola border.
- Famous Dams: Cohara Bassa and Kariba Dams
- Drains into: It drains into the Indian Ocean via a 100-km-wide delta.

Pax Silica Initiative

News: The opposition parties recently criticized Prime Minister over India's exclusion from the United States–led Pax Silica initiative, attributing it to a sharp deterioration in his relationship with U.S. President.

About Pax Silica Initiative

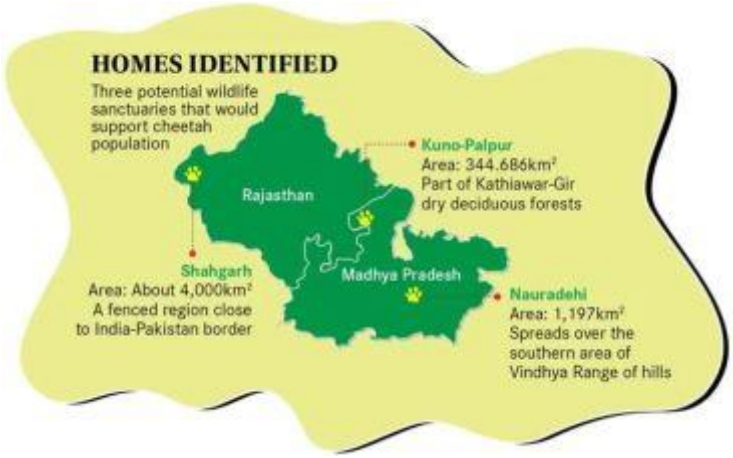
Source – BS

- Pax Silica is a United States–led strategic initiative focused on building a secure, resilient, and innovation-driven silicon and artificial intelligence supply chain.
- The initiative spans the full technology ecosystem, from critical minerals and energy inputs to advanced manufacturing, semiconductors, AI infrastructure, software platforms, and global logistics.
- Participating Countries: The inaugural Pax Silica Summit included Japan, the Republic of Korea, Singapore, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, Israel, the United Arab Emirates, and Australia.
    - Guest contributions were provided by Taiwan, the European Union, Canada, and the OECD.
    - It is supported by leading global companies and investors across the AI and semiconductor ecosystem.
        - Representative firms include Sony, Hitachi, Fujitsu, Samsung, SK Hynix, ASML, Rio Tinto, DeepMind, Temasek, and MGX.
- Strategic Purpose: It responds to the strategic importance of artificial intelligence by reducing coercive dependencies, strengthening supply chain resilience, and promoting fair market practices to protect sensitive technologies and critical infrastructure.
- Focus Areas: Pax Silica focuses on securing key segments of the global technology stack.
    - Priority areas include software applications and platforms, frontier foundation models, and information connectivity and network infrastructure.
    - Additional focus areas include compute, semiconductors, advanced manufacturing, transportation logistics, critical minerals refining and processing, and energy grids and power generation.

Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary

News: Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary will become the third home for cheetahs in Madhya Pradesh.

About Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary



Source – ToI

- Location: Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary is the largest wildlife sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh.
    - The entire sanctuary is situated on a plateau that forms part of the Upper Vindhyan Range.
- It was established in 1975.
- River basins: It lies within the Deccan Peninsula biogeographic region and forms part of both the Ganga and Narmada river basins.
- Connecting: It plays a crucial role as a wildlife corridor by connecting Panna Tiger Reserve and Satpura Tiger Reserve.
    - It also indirectly connects Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve through Veerangana Rani Durgawati Wildlife Sanctuary, enabling movement of large mammals across landscapes.
- Rivers: The protected area is crossed by several rivers, including the north-flowing Kopra and the Bamner, Vyarma, and Bearma, all tributaries of the Ken River.
- The Veerangana Durgavati Tiger Reserve encompasses areas within the Nauradehi Wildlife Sanctuary and Durgavati Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Vegetation: The sanctuary is dominated by tropical dry deciduous forests, which are part of the Central Indian Monsoon Forests.
- Fauna: Teak is the dominant tree species found throughout the sanctuary.
    - Other important tree species include Saja, Dhawda, Sal, Tendu (Coromandel Ebony), Bhirra (East Indian Satinwood), and Mahua.
- Fauna:
    - Freshwater crocodiles are mainly found in natural water bodies such as Chakai Kunda Nala and the Bamner River, which provide suitable habitats for their survival.
    - Some of the highlighted bird species recorded in the sanctuary include the Dusky Eagle Owl, White-bellied Minivet, Himalayan Vulture, Eurasian Wryneck, and Verditer Flycatcher.

Ponduru Khadi

News: Srikakulam's famed Ponduru Khadi has received the prestigious Geographical Indication (GI) tag from the Government of India.

About Ponduru Khadi


Source: deccanchronicle

- Ponduru Khadi is a traditional handspun and handwoven cotton fabric produced in Ponduru village of Srikakulam district, Andhra Pradesh.
- The fabric is widely known for its fine texture, durability, and natural finish and was famously preferred by Mahatma Gandhi.
- Unique Raw Material: Ponduru Khadi is made from short-staple hill variety cotton that is naturally pest-resistant.
    - The cotton is cultivated using chemical-free farming practices, making the fabric environmentally sustainable.
    - This raw material contributes to the softness, breathability, and durability of the cloth.
- Traditional Production Process: The entire production process of Ponduru Khadi is carried out using age-old techniques passed down through generations.
    - Cotton ginning is performed using the jawbone of the indigenous Valuga fish, a practice unique to the region.
    - The cotton is then cleaned, carded, and converted into slivers, which are stored in dried banana stems.
    - Hand spinning is done using a rare single-spindle charkha with 24 spokes before weaving on traditional handlooms.
    - The craft is sustained by skilled weavers from the Sali, Padmasali, Pattusali, and Devanga communities.
    - Many weavers operate looms within their homes, making the craft deeply integrated into village life and culture.
- Historical and Cultural Significance:
    - Historically, nearly every household in Ponduru had a loom and produced khadi for personal use and export.
    - Ponduru Khadi was once exported to countries such as the United States, Japan, Denmark, and Sweden.
    - The fabric symbolizes self-reliance and aligns closely with Gandhian ideals of swadeshi and sustainable living.

ICTP Prize 2025

News: The ICTP announced the 2025 ICTP Prize to Indian Assistant Professor Titas Chanda of IIT-Madras and Sthitadhi Roy of ICTS Bengaluru.

About ICTP Prize 2025


Source – ICTP

- The ICTP Prize 2025 has been awarded for outstanding theoretical research in quantum many-body systems.
- Winners: The ICTP Prize 2025 was awarded to
    - Titas Chanda, Assistant Professor at IIT-Madras.
    - Sthitadhi Roy, Assistant Professor at the International Centre for Theoretical Sciences, Bengaluru, under the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research.
- Awarding body: The prize is awarded by the International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP), which was founded in 1964 by Nobel laureate Abdus Salam.
- Prize is dedicated to: The 2025 ICTP Prize was dedicated to the memory of Italian physicist Giancarlo Ghirardi.
- Awarded for: The ICTP Prize 2025 recognizes exceptional and original contributions to the theory of quantum many-body systems at the interface of condensed matter physics and quantum information science.
    - Their work is relevant to real problems in keeping quantum devices, such as quantum computers and sensors, under control and understanding their behaviour when they are not in equilibrium.

About ICTP Prize

- Established: The ICTP Prize was created in 1982 by the ICTP Scientific Council.
- It is awarded annually to young scientists from developing countries for outstanding and original contributions in physics.
- Prize components: The prize includes a sculpture, a certificate, and a cash award.
- Each year, the prize is given in honour of a scientist who made outstanding contributions to the relevant field.

Note: Quantum many-body systems are complex assemblies of interacting particles where quantum mechanical effects play a crucial role, making them essential for understanding materials and fundamental physics phenomena.

SDAT Squash World Cup 2025

News: The Indian Squash Team won its first-ever World Cup title at the SDAT Squash World Cup 2025.

About SDAT Squash World Cup 2025

Source: olympics.com

- Organized by: World Squash Federation (WSF) in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- Winner: India
- Runner up: Hong Kong, China
- India becomes the first Asian country to win the SDAT Squash World Cup.
- India is also only the fourth nation after Australia, England and Egypt to win the Squash World Cup title in its five editions.
- Notable players
    - India won the trophy under the captainship of Abhay Singh – India No. 1 and Arjuna Awardee.
- Former winners: England, Australia and Egypt

Viksit Bharat Gramin Rozgar Bill, 2025

News: The Union government is set to introduce the Viksit Bharat Guarantee For Rozgar And Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill, 2025 in the Lok Sabha. The Bill seeks to replace the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, 2005 (MGNREGA).

Viksit Bharat Guarantee For Rozgar And Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Bill, 2025

Source – HT

- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Rural Development
- Aim: The Bill aims to establish a future-ready, convergence driven, saturation-oriented rural development architecture.
- It will support the accelerated pace of rural development in accordance with the vision of Viksit Bharat @2047, thereby empowering the rural households through increased employment opportunities.

Key Provisions

- Shift From Demand-Driven to Supply-Driven Model: The Bill marks a fundamental shift from a demand-driven employment guarantee to a supply-driven rural jobs scheme.
    - Employment generation under the new framework will be limited by pre-fixed budgetary allocations rather than actual demand from rural households.
    - Unlike MGNREGA, workers will no longer have an enforceable right to demand employment.
- Increase in Guaranteed Workdays: The Bill increases the number of guaranteed workdays per rural household from 100 days to 125 days per financial year. However, this increase is subject to budgetary ceilings determined by the Union government.

- Increased Financial Burden on States: The financial contribution required from States will rise significantly under the new Bill.
    - For most States and Union Territories with legislatures, the cost-sharing ratio will shift to 60:40 between the Centre and the States.
    - For north-eastern States, Himalayan States, and certain Union Territories, the cost-sharing ratio will remain at 90:10.
    - Under MGNREGA, the effective cost-sharing was approximately 90:10 for all States.
- Centralised Budget Allocation: The Bill empowers the Union government to determine State-wise normative allocations for each financial year.
    - These allocations will be based on "objective parameters" that will be prescribed by the Central government.
    - States will no longer be able to seek additional funds based on increased demand for work.
- Restricted Geographic Coverage: The Union government will have the authority to notify specific rural areas within States where the scheme will be implemented.
    - This represents a departure from the universal coverage model of MGNREGA, which applied to all rural areas.
- Control Over Timing of Work: The Bill allows the programme to be paused during peak agricultural seasons.
    - This provision is intended to ensure the availability of labour for agricultural activities but may reduce employment security for rural workers.
- Codification of Technological Measures: Technological interventions previously introduced administratively under MGNREGA are formally incorporated into the new law.
    - These include mobile app-based attendance systems, Aadhaar-based wage payments, and geotagging of worksites.

SHANTI Bill, 2025

News: The Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India (SHANTI) Bill, 2025, was introduced in the Lok Sabha. The Bill seeks to reform India's nuclear energy framework to support the government's goal of achieving 100 gigawatt nuclear power capacity by 2047.

SHANTI Bill, 2025

Source – BS

- Full name: Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy for Transforming India Bill (SHANTI Bill), 2025

- Nodal Ministry: Department of Atomic Energy

Key Provisions

- Repeal of Existing Nuclear Laws: The Bill proposes the repeal of the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, which currently governs nuclear activities in India.
    - It also seeks to repeal the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010, which regulates liability in case of nuclear accidents.
- New Legal Framework for Nuclear Energy: The Bill establishes a unified framework to govern the production, use, and regulation of nuclear energy and ionizing radiation in India.
- Entry of Private Sector in Nuclear Power: For the first time, private companies, joint ventures, and other eligible entities will be allowed to apply for licences to set up and operate nuclear power facilities.
    - Private entities will also be permitted to transport nuclear fuel, subject to regulatory approval.
    - This marks a major departure from the existing public sector monopoly in civil nuclear power.
- Activities Reserved for the Government: Sensitive activities such as uranium enrichment, spent nuclear fuel management, and heavy water production will remain under the exclusive control of the Union government.
- Licensing and Regulatory Oversight: All nuclear and radiation-related activities will require a licence from the Central government.
    - In addition, operators must obtain safety authorisation from the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB). The Bill grants statutory status to the AERB and clearly defines its regulatory powers.
- Strengthening of Nuclear Safety Regulation: The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board will be empowered to regulate radiation exposure, waste management, safety inspections, and emergency preparedness.
    - The Bill authorizes the Centre to take control of radioactive substances or radiation-generating equipment in situations involving radiation hazards.
    - The cost of safe disposal may be recovered from the entity holding the safety authorization.
- Liability in Case of Nuclear Accidents: The operator of a nuclear installation will be primarily liable for any nuclear damage caused by an accident.
    - Exceptions apply in cases of grave natural disasters of an exceptional character, armed conflict, war, civil unrest, or terrorism.
    - If compensation exceeds the operator's liability limit, the Central government will assume responsibility for additional compensation.
- Insurance and Financial Security Requirements: Nuclear operators will be required to maintain insurance or other financial security to cover potential nuclear damage.
    - The Bill provides for the establishment of a Nuclear Damage Claims Commission to adjudicate compensation claims. This replaces the existing liability framework under the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010.
- Treatment of Research and Innovation Activities: Research and innovation activities in the nuclear sector will largely be exempt from licensing requirements.
    - Exceptions will apply in cases involving national security concerns or activities reserved exclusively for the government.

Key Facts About Jordan

News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrived in Amman on a landmark Jordan visit after 37 years, coinciding with 75 years of diplomatic relations.

Key Facts About Jordan

Source – Britannica

- Location: It is a country in Western Asia, situated at the crossroads of the continents of Asia, Africa, and Europe.
- Naming: Jordan is named after the Jordan River.
- Capital City: Amman
- Bordered by: Jordan is bordered by Syria to the north, Iraq to the east, Saudi Arabia to the south and southeast, and Israel and Palestine to the west.
- Water Bodies: Jordan is associated with the Dead Sea, the Gulf of Aqaba, and the Sea of Galilee, with the Dead Sea along its western border.
- Main ports: Jordan is largely landlocked, with a 26-km coastline on the Gulf of Aqaba in Red Sea and Al-Aqabah is its only port.
- The Gulf of Aqaba: Jordan has a 26-kilometre-long coastline along the Gulf of Aqaba in the Red Sea.
- Climate: Jordan's climate varies greatly, with Mediterranean conditions in the highlands and arid desert conditions in the eastern regions.
- Terrain: It has an arid desert plateau in the east and a north–south geological rift along the west.
- Major River: The Jordan River flows through the country and drains into the Dead Sea and the Yarmuk River, an eastern tributary of the Jordan, forms part of Jordan's northern boundary with Syria.
- Highest Point: Jabal Umm ad Dami (1,854 m).
- Lowest Point: The Dead Sea at – 420 m from sea level, making it the lowest land point on Earth.
- Forest cover: Forests cover is less than 2% of Jordan's area.

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