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JAMMU & KASHMIR

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Mitigation of Glacial Lake Outburst Floods in J&K

Why in News?

The Jammu and Kashmir government is implementing measures to mitigate the risks of **Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs)**.

Key Points

- **Geographical Vulnerability to GLOFs:**
 - The region's high-altitude glaciers and lakes make it particularly vulnerable to GLOFs.
 - Rising global temperatures are accelerating **glacier melting**, leading to the formation of glacial lakes that risk sudden breaches.
 - These breaches can release millions of cubic meters of water and debris, posing severe threats to downstream communities.
- **Comprehensive Mitigation Strategy:**
 - The J&K government has adopted a proactive and technologically advanced approach to address this threat.
 - Key measures include:
 - Expeditions and data collection to study glacial lake dynamics.
 - Bathymetric surveys, water sampling, and meteorological data collection for risk assessment.
 - Categorization of glacial lakes based on 17 critical parameters, including size, location, and potential mass movement zones.
- **Formation of Focused Monitoring Committee:**
 - The Focused Glacial Lake Outburst Flood Monitoring Committee (FGMC) oversees the implementation of mitigation strategies.
 - The committee has identified:
 - 14 high-risk glacial lakes
 - 3 moderate-risk lakes
 - 7 low-risk lakes
 - Expeditions to high-risk lakes like Sheeshnag and Somsar have enhanced preparedness and understanding.
- **Future Plans and Preparedness:**
 - The government plans to expand mitigation efforts, improve predictive abilities for heavy rainfall, and train key stakeholders like **National Disaster**

Response Fund (NDRF), State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF), and Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).

- Aapda Mitras (local disaster response volunteers) are being trained and sensitized for vigilance in vulnerable areas.
- **Scientific Expeditions for Risk Assessment:**
 - The government has conducted specialized expeditions led by Central University of Jammu to study critical glacial lakes.
 - Three high-risk lakes in Kishtwar district were analyzed:
 - **Mundikar Lake**
 - **Hangu Lake**
 - An unnamed glacial lake
 - These expeditions provided valuable data on lake conditions, environmental factors, and potential GLOF risks.

Permafrost Melting

Why in News?

Permafrost melt is posing a unique environmental threat in the **Kashmir Himalaya**. A new study reveals that **thawing permafrost could impact 193 km of roads, 2,415 households, 903 alpine lakes, and eight hydropower projects** in the region.

Key Points

- **Permafrost and Its Impact in the Indian Himalaya:**
 - Permafrost refers to **any ground material**, including soil, sediment, and rock, that **remains frozen continuously for at least two years**.
 - Most permafrost on Earth has **existed for several millennia**.
 - Its Consequences:
 - **Global warming** is causing permafrost to thaw, leading to significant environmental consequences.
 - Permafrost stores large amounts of **organic carbon**, which is **released as methane** upon thawing, a potent **greenhouse gas**.
- **Study on Permafrost in Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh:**
 - A study published in **Remote Sensing Applications: Society and Environment** by researchers from the **University of Kashmir and IIT-Bombay** analyzed permafrost in the region.

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Note:

- Permafrost covers **64.8% of the total area of J&K and Ladakh**:
 - 26.7% is **continuous permafrost** (most of the soil remains frozen).
 - 23.8% is **discontinuous permafrost** (more than half of the soil is frozen).
 - 14.3% is **sporadic permafrost** (patches of frozen soil).
- Methodology of the Study:
 - Researchers analyzed weekly satellite temperature data from 2002 to 2023 using **NASA's MODIS sensor**.
 - The data helped identify areas with consistent freezing temperatures and those with intermittent or no freezing.
- **Factors Driving Permafrost Degradation:**
 - Natural Factors:
 - Rising surface temperatures due to **climate change**.
 - **Earthquakes** that disrupt permafrost layers.
 - Human Activities:
 - **Deforestation** and land-use changes **reduce vegetation cover**, exposing permafrost to solar radiation.
 - Infrastructure development (dams, roads, real estate projects) accelerates permafrost thawing.
 - **Tourism**-related activities increase pressure on permafrost stability.
- **Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) and Permafrost:**
 - Permafrost thawing increases **risks for thousands of glacial lakes** in the Indian Himalayas.
 - The study identified 332 proglacial lakes in J&K, of which 65 pose significant GLOF risks.
 - **The Chamoli disaster (2021) in Uttarakhand** and **South Lhonak Lake flood (2023) in Sikkim** highlight the dangers of permafrost-related glacial lake collapses.
- **Impact on Water Resources and Infrastructure:**
 - Permafrost degradation affects **groundwater reserves** and **river flow**, especially in permafrost-fed regions.
 - No comprehensive studies exist to quantify these effects in India.

- **Military infrastructure in Ladakh is at risk due to permafrost thawing**, affecting national security.
- Strategic roads passing through permafrost zones could degrade, impacting connectivity.
- **Mitigation and Future Planning:**
 - New infrastructure projects should consider permafrost presence to ensure **sustainable development**.
 - Environmental impact assessments for projects like **hydroelectric plants** must account for permafrost risks.
 - Experts recommend deploying **in-situ data loggers** to **monitor temperature fluctuations** and improve permafrost research accuracy.

Glacial Lake Outburst Flood (GLOF)

- It is a type of catastrophic flood that occurs when the **dam containing a glacial lake fails**, releasing a large volume of water.
- This type of flood is **typically caused by rapid melting of glaciers or the buildup of water** in the lake due to heavy precipitation or the inflow of meltwater.
- In February 2021, **Chamoli district in Uttarakhand** witnessed flash floods which are suspected to have been caused by GLOFs.
- **Causes:**
 - These floods can be triggered by a number of factors, including **changes in the volume of the glacier**, changes in the **water level of the lake**, and **earthquakes**.
 - According to **NDMA (National Disaster Management Authority)**, **glacial retreat due to climate change** occurring in most parts of the **Hindu Kush Himalayas** has given rise to the formation of numerous new glacial lakes, which are the major cause of GLOFs.

Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden

Why in News?

The Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir officially opened the **Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden**, where **blooming tulips** created a beautiful setting for tourists in Srinagar.

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Key Points

- **Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden:**
 - About:
 - Originally known as the Model Floriculture Center, the Indira Gandhi Memorial Tulip Garden is a **major tourist attraction in Srinagar**, Jammu and Kashmir.
 - It is the **largest tulip garden in Asia**, covering approximately 30 hectares.
 - The garden is located at the **foothills of the Zabarwan Range**, overlooking **Dal Lake**.
 - Establishment and Layout:
 - **Established in 2007**, the garden was developed to promote floriculture and tourism in the Kashmir Valley.
 - Designed in a terraced layout, it consists of seven terraces built on sloping ground.
 - Floral Diversity:
 - The garden houses **48 varieties of tulips**, offering a vibrant display of colors.
 - It also features other flowers, including **daffodils, hyacinths, roses, narcissus**, and various ornamental plants.
 - Tulip Festival:
 - **The Tulip Festival** is an **annual celebration** organized by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir.
 - The festival **aims to showcase the floral diversity of the garden** and attract tourists.
 - It takes place at the **onset of spring**, marking the beginning of the **tourism season in the Kashmir Valley**.

Dal Lake



- It is a lake in **Srinagar**, the capital of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).
- It is one of the **world's largest natural lakes and the second largest lake** in J&K.
- It is integral to tourism and recreation in Kashmir and is named the **"Jewel in the crown of Kashmir" or "Srinagar's Jewel"**.
- It is also an **important source for commercial operations in fishing and water plant harvesting**.
- It covers an **area of 18 square kilometres** and is part of a **natural wetland** including its floating gardens.
 - The **floating gardens**, known as **"Raad"** in Kashmiri, blossom with lotus flowers during July and August.

Power Amnesty Scheme in J&K

Why in News?

Jammu and Kashmir **Chief Minister** Omar Abdullah extended **the power amnesty scheme** for domestic consumers.

Key Points

- **Repeated Implementation:**
 - The Administrative Council, chaired by **Lieutenant Governor** Manoj Sinha, approved the **extension of the Amnesty Scheme-2022 until 31st March 2025**, to benefit domestic electricity consumers.
 - The scheme was reintroduced after many consumers were unable to avail of its benefits in 2024.

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➤ Proposed Incentive-Based Scheme:

- The CM suggested a new scheme where incentives on outstanding dues would be linked to **future payments, encouraging timely bill settlements.**
- He also highlighted the **importance of metering to improve revenue collection** and reduce financial losses.
- The **amnesty scheme helped recover Rs 235.58 crore** from domestic consumers in 2023-2024.

Conservation of Heritage Sites in J&K

Why in News?

The Jammu and Kashmir Government informed the legislative Assembly that it is actively working on **45 projects**, under a scheme aimed at **conserving heritage sites** in the Union Territory.

Key Points

➤ Phase-II Heritage Conservation Projects:

- The Jammu and Kashmir government has identified 73 additional projects under **Phase-II of the UT-level scheme for heritage conservation.**
- Between **2019 and 2024, 15 projects were undertaken under capital expenditure (CAPEX).**
 - Work is in progress on 33 projects under the first phase of the scheme, which began in 2022.
- Additionally, seven projects are under renovation at the Mubarak Mandi heritage complex.

➤ Funding and Financial Allocation:

- A total of Rs 310.71 crore has been sanctioned for CAPEX and the UT-level heritage scheme covering Phases I and II.
- So far, Rs 86.40 crore has been utilized for CAPEX and the first phase of the projects.

➤ Restoration of Mubarak Mandi Heritage Complex:

- Rs 59.69 crore has been sanctioned for seven projects within **the Mubarak Mandi** heritage complex.
- Mubarak Mandi was the **royal residence of the Dogra dynasty until 1925.** It was declared a protected monument in 2005, and **the Mubarak Mandi Jammu Heritage Society (MMJHS) was formed in 2006** for its preservation.

➤ Heritage Conservation Strategies:

- The **government scheme launched in 2022** focuses on value-based restoration, preservation, and promotion of Jammu and Kashmir's architectural heritage.
- The **Directorate of Archives, Archaeology, and Museums** is ensuring legal and systematic protection for heritage sites.
- **Regular surveys** are conducted to identify historical sites for restoration.
- **Public awareness campaigns** are being organized to educate communities on heritage conservation and tourism.

➤ Technology-Driven Heritage Protection:

- **3D mapping and digital archiving** are being employed to document heritage sites.
- **Ancient manuscripts** are being digitized to create online databases for accessibility and preservation.

➤ Climate and Disaster Protection Measures:

- Special measures are being implemented to protect heritage sites from **natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods.**
- Climate change impact assessments are being conducted for long-term conservation planning.
- Efforts are also underway to **prevent urban encroachment and vandalism** at historical sites.

Terrorist Infiltration Probe in Jammu

Why in News?

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) searched various locations across Jammu, targeting premises linked to terrorist sympathizers while **investigating the infiltration of terrorists** from across the border.

Key Points

➤ Focus on Over Ground Workers (OGWs):

- The NIA conducted **raids at the homes of Over Ground Workers (OGWs)** linked to banned terrorist organizations such as **Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM).**
- The raids also targeted sympathizers and cadres associated with these terrorist outfits.

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- The operation was based on intelligence inputs regarding the infiltration of LeT and JeM terrorists into India via the **International Border (IB)** and **the Line of Control (LoC)**.
- Role of OGWs:
 - Reports indicate that OGWs and terror associates in border areas provided logistical support for infiltrating terrorists.
 - These support activities included:
 - Providing food, shelter, and money
 - Guiding terrorists through difficult terrain
 - Ensuring their safe passage into India
- **Connection to Terrorist Infiltration Case:**
 - The investigation pertains to terrorist infiltration and a series of attacks on security forces and civilians in recent months.
 - The NIA described these incidents as **part of a larger criminal conspiracy by terror outfits to wage war** against the Indian government.
- **Movement of Infiltrated Terrorists:**
 - The infiltrated terrorists are suspected to have **spread across multiple districts in Jammu and Kashmir**.
 - Identified districts include **Kathua, Udhampur, Doda, Kishtwar, Reasi, Rajouri, Poonch, and the Valley**.

National Investigation Agency (NIA)

- **About:**
 - The **NIA** is the **Central Counter-Terrorism Law Enforcement Agency of India** mandated to investigate all the **offences affecting the sovereignty, security and integrity of India**. It includes:
 - Friendly relations with foreign states.
 - Against atomic and nuclear facilities.
 - **Smuggling of arms, drugs and fake Indian currency** and infiltration from across the borders.
 - The offences under the **statutory laws enacted to implement international treaties, agreements, conventions and resolutions of the United Nations**, its agencies and other international organisations.

- It was **constituted under the National Investigation Agency (NIA) Act, 2008**.
- The agency is empowered to deal with the investigation of terror related crimes across states **without special permission from the states** under **written proclamation from the Ministry of Home Affairs**.
- **Headquarters:** New Delhi

Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967

Why in News?

The government has banned 'Jammu & Kashmir Ittihadul Muslimeen' (JKIM) and 'Awami Action Committee (AAC)' as unlawful associations for five years under **Section 3(1) of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), 1967**.

Key Points

- **Ban on JKIM and AAC:**
 - Union Home Minister stated that these organizations incited unrest and posed a threat to India's unity and integrity.
- **Reasons for the Ban:**
 - Members of JKIM and AAC were found promoting **separatism in Jammu & Kashmir**.
 - They engaged in **anti-national and subversive activities**, including:
 - Spreading discontent among the people.
 - Inciting unrest and destabilizing law and order.
 - Supporting **terrorism** and fostering hatred against the government.

Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, 1967

- UAPA was **passed in 1967**. It aims at effective prevention of **unlawful activities associations in India**.
- Unlawful activity refers to any action taken by an individual or association intended to disrupt the territorial integrity and sovereignty of India.

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Note:

- The Act assigns **absolute power to the central government**, by way of which if the Centre deems an activity as unlawful then it may, **by way of an Official Gazette**, declare it so.
 - It has the **death penalty and life imprisonment as the highest punishments**.
- Under UAPA, **both Indian and foreign nationals can be charged**. It will be applicable to the offenders in the same manner, even if crime is committed on a foreign land, outside India.
- **The investigating agency can file a charge sheet in maximum 180 days after the arrests and the duration can be extended further** after intimating the court.
- The **2004 amendment added “terrorist act” to the list of offences to ban organisations for terrorist activities**, under which 34 outfits were banned.
 - Till 2004, “unlawful” activities referred to actions related to secession and cession of territory.
- In August, Parliament cleared **the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Bill, 2019** to designate individuals as terrorists on certain grounds provided in the Act.
 - The Act empowers the Director General of **National Investigation Agency (NIA)** to grant approval of seizure or attachment of property when the case is investigated by the said agency.
 - The **Act empowers the officers of the NIA, of the rank of Inspector or above, to investigate cases of terrorism** in addition to those conducted by the DSP or ACP or above rank officer in a state.

- The **Minister In-Charge of Forest, Ecology & Environment Department denied claims** of adverse effects on fishermen in a written reply.
- He stated that **Wular Lake contributes nearly 60% of Kashmir’s total fish production**.
- The lake currently supports 5,200 registered fishermen, and fish production has increased over the past three years.
- **Fish Production Statistics:**
 - In **2023-24**, the fish production recorded was:
 - 1,215.25 metric tonnes (MT) of local fish
 - 3,378.611 MT of carp
- **Restoration Efforts for Wular Lake:**
 - In response to another query on restoring Wular Lake’s pristine condition, the minister highlighted **significant conservation measures undertaken**.
 - The government **recognizes Wular Lake as a wetland** of international importance under **the Ramsar Convention**.
- **Wular Conservation and Management Authority (WUCMA):**
 - The government has established the Wular Conservation and Management Authority (WUCMA) to oversee lake restoration.
 - WUCMA has been implementing a **Comprehensive Management Action Plan (CMAP)**, which includes:
 - Survey and demarcation of the wetland.
 - Improving water regimes of Wular and associated wetlands to restore ecological services and economic benefits.
 - Biodiversity conservation efforts to maintain the lake’s environmental balance.

Wular Lake Contribution to J&K Fish Production

Why in News?

The Jammu and Kashmir government dismissed reports claiming that the degradation of **Wular Lake** has had a negative impact on the fishing community.

Key Points

- **Discussion on Wular Lake and Its Impact on Fishermen:**
 - A question was raised in the Assembly regarding **the impact of Wular Lake’s deterioration on the fishing community**.

Ramsar Convention

- **The Ramsar Convention** is an international treaty signed in 1971 in Ramsar, Iran, under the auspices of **UNESCO**, aimed at conserving wetlands of international importance.
 - In India, it **came into force on 1st February 1982**, under which wetlands of international importance are declared as Ramsar sites.
- **Montreux Record** is a register of **wetland sites of International Importance** where **changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring, or are likely to occur** as a result of technological developments, pollution or other human interference.
 - It is maintained as part of the **Ramsar List**.

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Fashion Show Controversy During Ramzan

Why in News?

A fashion show held during the **Islamic holy month of Ramzan** at **Gulmarg**, a tourist spot in north Kashmir sparked controversy. J&K Chief Minister sought a report to take appropriate action.

Key Points

➤ Event Details:

- A fashion show featuring male and female models was organized to mark the **15th anniversary of the designer label**, Shivan & Narresh.
- The event took place against the backdrop of snow-laden slopes in Gulmarg, and models showcased the label's skiwear collection.

➤ Public Outrage and Online Backlash:

- In the past two days, **videos of the event went viral online, triggering objections** from many netizens in Kashmir.
- **Critics condemned the event** for being inappropriate during the Islamic holy month of Ramzan.

Ramzan

➤ About:

- Ramadan is considered the **holiest month in the Islamic calendar**, during which Muslims fast from dawn until sunset, abstaining from food, drink, and other physical needs.

➤ Fasting:

- Fasting during Ramadan is seen as a **way to purify the soul and gain a deeper understanding of God's blessings**.
- Besides fasting, Muslims are encouraged to engage in **acts of charity, prayer, and good deeds** during Ramadan.

➤ Quran:

- Muslims believe that **the Quran**, the holy book of Islam, was first revealed to **Prophet Muhammad** during Ramadan, specifically on **Laylat al-Qadr**, the **Night of Power**, which is believed to fall within the last ten nights of the month.

➤ Eid al-Fitr:

- The **end of Ramadan is marked by Eid al-Fitr**, a **major festival** in the Islamic calendar.

J&K to boost River Cruise Tourism

Why in News?

The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the Jammu and Kashmir government to **enhance river cruise tourism** on **three National Waterways** in the region.

Key Points

➤ Objective of the Agreement:

- The MoU **aims to enhance tourism, generate employment, and boost economic growth** in Jammu and Kashmir.
- It will introduce a **new mode of leisure and budget tourism** on the region's rivers.

➤ National Waterways in J&K:

- Jammu and Kashmir has three declared national waterways:
 - River Chenab (NW-26)
 - River Jhelum (NW-49)
 - River Ravi (NW-84)

➤ Development of River Cruise Infrastructure:

- The IWAI has allocated **Rs 100 crore for the development of river cruise tourism** in J&K.
- This initiative aligns with the **vision to promote cruise tourism from Kashmir to Kerala and Assam to Gujarat**, announced during the Second Meeting of the **Inland Waterways Development Council (IWDC)**.

➤ Infrastructure to be Developed:

- IWAI will provide waterside infrastructure, including:
 - Ten floating jetties
 - **Chenab River (NW-26)**: Two jetties at Akhnoor and Reasi (near Jammu).
 - **Jhelum River (NW-49)**: Seven jetties at Pantha Chowk, Zero Bridge, Amira Kadal, Shah-e-Hamdan, Safa Kadal/Chattabal Shrine, Sumbal Bridge, and Gund Prang (in Srinagar and Bandipora).
 - **Ravi River (NW-84)**: One jetty at Sohar.
 - Landside facilities such as waiting halls and passenger amenities.

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➤ Navigation and Safety Measures:

- IWAI will:
 - Develop navigational fairways through dredging where required.
 - Provide navigational aids for safe vessel movement.
 - Conduct regular hydrographic surveys.
- Responsibilities of Jammu and Kashmir:
 - Provide land for landside infrastructure construction.
 - Facilitate statutory clearances for project implementation.
 - Appoint cruise operators for the identified river sectors.
 - Seek technical assistance from IWAI when necessary.

➤ National Expansion of Waterways Infrastructure:

- Major efforts include:
 - Capacity augmentation of **NW-1, NW-2, NW-3, and NW-16**.
 - Developing inland waterway terminals, fairways, navigational locks, and night navigation facilities.

➤ Boosting Cruise Tourism Across India:

- IWAI has undertaken multiple projects to promote cruise tourism, especially on **River Ganga** and **River Brahmaputra**.
- The successful launch of MV Ganga Vilas, the world's longest river cruise, showcases this commitment.

Inland Waterways Authority of India

- It **came into existence on 27th October 1986** for development and regulation of inland waterways for shipping and navigation.
- It primarily undertakes **projects for development and maintenance of IWT infrastructure** on national waterways through grants received from the **Ministry of Shipping**.

Ecotourism in J&K

Why in News?

The Jammu and Kashmir government announced **new rules for Bangus**, a remote tourist spot near **the Line of Control (LoC)** in north Kashmir, to promote it as an **ecotourism** destination.

Key Points

➤ Uncontrolled Construction in Popular Tourist Spots:

- The decision to develop Bangus as an ecotourism destination follows **unchecked and unplanned construction in Pahalgam, Gulmarg, and Sonamarg**.
- Authorities have observed **rapid concrete expansion in these traditional tourist hubs**, affecting the ecological balance.

➤ Focus on Sustainable Development:

- The concerned department aims to **prevent large-scale hotel and building constructions** to maintain the region's ecological balance.
- The approach **prioritizes sustainable tourism** while preserving the natural landscape.

➤ Basic Amenities for Visitors:

- The government plans to create recreational spaces, rain shelters, public conveniences, signages, lighting, and waste disposal facilities.
 - These developments aim to enhance visitor experience while minimizing environmental impact.
- Work on basic facilities will begin after the Deputy Commissioner of Kupwara, in consultation with the Forest Department, identifies suitable land parcels.
 - **Necessary permissions and clearances will be obtained** through the Parivesh Portal for forest clearance before proceeding with construction.

➤ Geographic and Strategic Importance:

- **Bangus is located in Kupwara district** near the Line of Control (LoC), approximately 100 km from Srinagar.
- It **consists of two bowl-shaped valleys** at an altitude of 10,000 feet.
- The region, once an infiltration route for militants, is now being promoted as a secure tourist destination.

➤ Promoting Local Livelihoods:

- The J&K Tourism Department is registering paying guest houses to **support local shepherds, nomads, and residents**.
- This initiative seeks to **preserve and promote the local culture, traditions, and cuisine** while offering tourists an immersive experience.

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Line of Control



- The Line of Control (LoC) emerged from the 1948 ceasefire line negotiated by the United Nations (UN) after the Kashmir War.
- It was designated as the LoC in 1972, following the Shimla Agreement between the two countries.
- LoC is demarcated up to the Siachen Glacier (Point NJ9842)- the world's highest battlefield.
- LoC is delineated on a map signed by the Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) of both armies and has the international sanctity of a legal agreement.

Business Rules for J&K

Why in News?

The Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister announced that the government had framed the **Business Rules for the Union Territory (UT) administration** and sent them to J&K **Lieutenant Governor** for the Centre's final approval.

Key Points

- **Purpose and Significance:**
 - The Business Rules aim to prevent confusion regarding institutional dignity and respect.

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Note:

- The CM emphasized the need to uphold the institution's honor, expressing disappointment over the loss of J&K's statehood.
- **Key Provisions of the Revised Business Rules:**
 - The revised rules **outline the roles and authority of the Chief Minister, Cabinet, Ministers, and Administrative Secretaries.**
 - They specify that **matters related to law and order, public order, and All India Services remain under the Lieutenant Governor's jurisdiction.**
 - The amendments define the **procedures for resolving disagreements between the Lieutenant Governor and the Council of Ministers or an individual Minister.**
- **Context and Implementation:**
 - The J&K government took over four months to draft these rules as mandated by **the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019.**
 - J&K became a Union Territory in 2019 following **the abrogation of Article 370.**
 - The UT conducted its **first Assembly elections in 2024.**

Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019

- It **divided Jammu and Kashmir into 2 Union Territories** of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.
- It repealed **Article 370**, which had granted Jammu and Kashmir a unique status.
- **Leh and Kargil** districts were included in the Union Territory of Ladakh, while the remaining areas became part of Jammu and Kashmir.
- **Five Lok Sabha seats** were retained by Jammu and Kashmir, and one was transferred to Ladakh.
- **Legislature:** The seats in the Legislative Assembly will be **reserved for tribal and scheduled caste people** to keep the proportion intact of their population in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.
 - The **Lt. Governors** can nominate **two women members for the Assembly** to represent women if women are not sufficiently represented to justify equality between men and women.

- The elected **Legislative Assembly will be for 5 years**, and the Lt. The Governor will summon the Assembly once every six months.
- The **Legislative Assembly has the right to pass a law** for any given part of the Union Territory of J&K related to any of the matters listed in the Indian Constitutions State's List **except for the "Police" and "Public Order."**
- Any matter specified in the **Concurrent List will be applied to Indian Union Territories.** Furthermore, **Parliament** will have the decision-making power to create laws for Jammu Kashmir and its Union Territory.

Amarnath Yatra 2025

Why in News?

The **38-day annual Amarnath pilgrimage** to the 3,880-metre-high holy cave shrine in South Kashmir will begin on **3rd July 2025.**

Key Points

Board Meeting and Decision:

- The **Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board (SASB)** held its 48th board meeting at Raj Bhawan under the chairmanship of **Lt. Governor Manoj Sinha.**
- The board decided that the 38-day Amarnath Yatra will commence on 3rd July, 2025, and conclude on 9th August, 2025 (Raksha Bandhan).
- The pilgrimage will **begin simultaneously from both routes – Pahalgam track (Anantnag district) and Baltal (Ganderbal district).**

Enhancing Facilities for Pilgrims:

- The board discussed improving facilities and services for devotees.
- **Measures were proposed** to increase lodging capacity at centres in Jammu, Srinagar, and other key locations.
- Plans were made to operationalize yatri facilitation centres for **e-KYC (Know Your Customer), Radio-Frequency Identification (RFID) card issuance, and on-spot registration at Nowgam and Katra railway stations.**
- Similar facility enhancements were recommended at Baltal, Pahalgam, Nunwan, and Pantha Chowk Srinagar.

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➤ **Infrastructure and Safety Measures:**

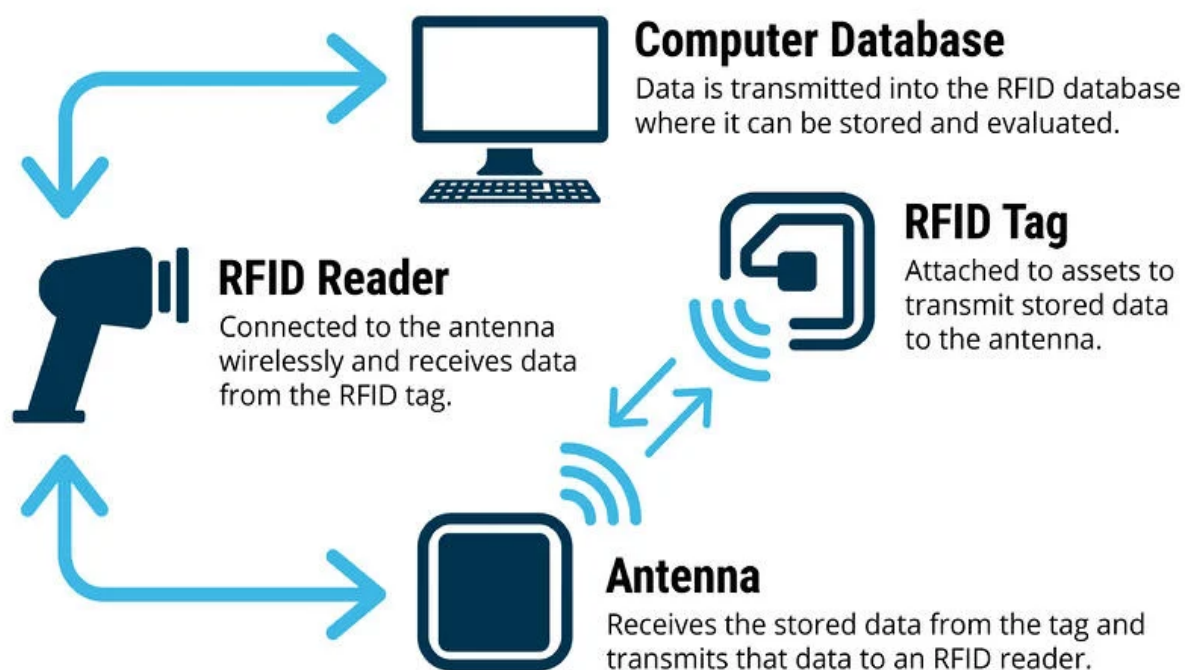
- The ongoing infrastructure projects and their progress were reviewed.
- The L-G stressed ensuring adequate arrangements and essential amenities along the pilgrimage route.
- The meeting discussed **decongestion measures at the holy cave and lower cave area.**

➤ **Security, Medical, and Logistics Enhancements:**

- The board deliberated on **disaster preparedness** and **mitigation strategies.**
- Adequate **Helicopter services and medical facilities** will be provided.
- Enhancements in weather forecasting infrastructure and security arrangements were also discussed.

Radio Frequency Identification

Basic RFID System



- RFID is a **type of passive wireless technology** that allows for tracking or matching of an item or individual.
- **The system has two basic parts: Tags and Readers.**
 - The **reader gives off radio waves and gets signals back from the RFID tag**, while the **tag uses radio waves to communicate** its identity and other information.
 - A **tag can be read from up to several feet away** and does not need to be within the direct line-of-sight of the reader to be tracked.
- The technology has been **approved since before the 1970s** but has become much more **prevalent in recent years** due to its usages in things like global supply chain management and pet microchipping.

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Note:

Amarnath Cave Shrine

- The Amarnath mountain features a cave on its south famously known as the **Amarnath Cave**. This cave is the location of the **Amarnath Temple**, a significant Hindu shrine situated in the **Pahalgam** tehsil of the Anantnag district in Jammu and Kashmir, India.
 - The shrine is perched at an altitude of 3,800 metres, contributing to the challenging nature of the pilgrimage.
- Amarnath Peak, a part of the **Himalayas** is a mountain with a peak elevation of 5,186 meters, in the Ganderbal district of Jammu and Kashmir, in the vicinity of Sonamarg.
- Amarnath yatra is an annual pilgrimage to the Amarnath cave, where devotees pay homage to an **ice stalagmite believed to be the lingam of Lord Shiva**.
 - The ice stalagmite forms every year during the **summer months** and reaches its maximum size in July and August, when thousands of Hindu devotees make an annual pilgrimage to the cave.

➤ Major Sporting Events:

- The Khelo India Winter Games 2025 will feature four major competitions:
 - Alpine Skiing
 - Ski Mountaineering
 - Snowboarding
 - Nordic Skiing
- Events will be hosted at **Kongdoori and Gulmarg Club in Gulmarg**.

Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG)

- The KIWG is a **multidisciplinary, national-level winter sports competition** that **promotes winter sports and encourages more athletes** to take up skiing and skating.
- It includes events such as **skiing, alpine skiing, nordic skiing, snow rugby, ice stock sport, snow baseball, mountaineering, snowshoe running, ice hockey, figure skating, and speed skating**.
- It is organized by the **Sports Authority of India** and the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports**.

Khelo India Winter Games

Why in News?

Jammu and Kashmir is going to host the **Khelo India Winter Games 2025** in Gulmarg from 9 to 12 March 2025, delivering a world-class winter sports experience in one of India's top snow destinations.

Key Points

- **Event Launch and Schedule:**
 - The Chief Minister launched the event's official website in Jammu.
 - The **games were originally scheduled for February 22-25** but were postponed due to insufficient snowfall.
- **The event featuring:**
 - Night skiing demonstration
 - Fireworks and laser show
 - Cultural programs
 - Competitive sporting events
 - Award ceremony

Article 370

Why in News?

On 25 February 2025, Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister stated that **Article 370** was described as a **"temporary or transitional" provision** because J&K's status had not been fully formalized **at the time of its accession to India in 1947**.

Key Points

➤ Article 370's Temporary Status:

- The Chief Minister asserted that the **promise of a plebiscite led to this classification**, as J&K's future was expected to be determined through democratic means.
- He emphasized the need to **revisit the Instrument of Accession** signed by **Dogra ruler Hari Singh and the Government of India in 1947**.
- He argued that while J&K's accession to India became final over time, the conditions and framework that enabled it should have remained unchanged.
- **He insisted** that both aspects—**accession and its governing framework—should be treated equally**, rather than considering one as permanent and the other as temporary.

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➤ **Post-2019 Changes in J&K:**

- He also acknowledged the changing atmosphere in J&K following [the abrogation of Article 370 in 2019](#).

Article 370

➤ **About:**

- Article 370 of the Indian constitution granted **special status to Jammu and Kashmir**.
- It was drafted by **N Gopalaswami Ayyangar**, a member of the **Constituent Assembly** of India and was added as a **'temporary provision'** in 1949.
- This article allowed Jammu and Kashmir to have its **constitution, flag, and autonomy** over most matters **except defence, foreign affairs, and communications**.
- The provision was based on the terms of the [Instrument of Accession](#), which was signed by the ruler of Jammu and Kashmir, Hari Singh, in 1947 following an invasion by Pakistan.

➤ **Repeal of Article 370:**

- **Presidential Order:** In the 2019 Presidential orders, **Parliament redefined the "constituent assembly of Jammu and Kashmir"** to mean the **"Legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir"**
 - By invoking the **President's rule**, Parliament then assumed the powers of the Legislative Assembly to revoke Article 370.
- **Resolutions in Parliament:** On **5th and 6th August 2019**, concurrent resolutions were passed by both houses of Parliament, [the Lok Sabha](#) and the [Rajya Sabha](#), respectively.
 - These resolutions revoked the **remaining provisions of Article 370** and replaced them with new provisions.
- [Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019](#): It was passed by Parliament in 2019 to bifurcate the state of Jammu and Kashmir into two **Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh**.

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Note:

Key Points

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