Current Affairs for UPPCS

Revision Handout

(August 2024–August 2025)

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UPPCS- August 2024 - August 2025

Uttar Pradesh's First AYUSH University

Why in News?

President **Droupadi Murmu** inaugurated Uttar Pradesh's first AYUSH University, named **Mahayogi Guru Gorakhnath AYUSH University**, in Gorakhpur.

- The President highlighted the spiritual and historical legacy of the region, stating that it is also the birthplace of Paramhansa Yogananda.

Key Points

- **Spiritual and Historical Legacy of Gorakhpur:**
  - **The Nath Tradition:**
    - The Nath tradition, **rooted in the teachings of Shri Adinath, Matsyendranath, and Guru Gorakhnath**, traces its origins to Gorakhpur.
    - Over time, this spiritual lineage has spread across India and **reached several countries worldwide, influencing diverse yogic and ascetic practices.**
  - **Role in India's Freedom Struggles:**
    - Gorakhpur holds not just spiritual significance but also a deep historical connection to **India's freedom movements**.
    - From monk-led uprisings in the 18th century to the Revolt of 1857- **First War of Independence**, this region has been a centre of resistance.
    - The sacrifices of freedom fighters like **Babu Bandhu Singh and** Ram Prasad Bismil are closely linked to this sacred land, highlighting its legacy of courage and patriotism.
- **About Guru Gorakhnath:**
  - Gorakhnath, who likely flourished around the 11th century CE, is regarded as a **revered Hindu yogi and the spiritual founder** of the **Kanphata yogis**, a sect of ascetics known for practising Hatha Yoga.
    - The Kanphata yogis emphasise both physical discipline and spiritual mastery, aligning with the principles of Hatha Yoga.
  - Hatha Yoga, associated closely with Gorakhnath's teachings, is a philosophical and spiritual system that uses **control over the body as a path to spiritual perfection.**
    - This school of thought **blends asceticism with intense yogic discipline**, marking a departure from ritualistic or purely devotional practices.

Paramhansa Yogananda

- **About:**
  - Paramhansa Yogananda (1893–1952) was the **first Indian yoga master to establish permanent residence** in the **Western world.**
  - He played a **pivotal role in introducing Indian spiritual philosophy** to Western audiences in the early 20th century.
- **A Lasting Spiritual Legacy:**
  - While his early presence in the West had a remarkable cultural impact, Yogananda's enduring legacy lies in the spiritual awakening he inspired.
  - He **continued to lecture and write actively until his death in 1952,** promoting a blend of **Kriya Yoga, meditation, and universal spirituality.**
  - His seminal work, **Autobiography of a Yogi, published in 1946**, sparked a spiritual revolution in the West.

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AYUSH Systems of Medicine

AYUSH encompasses Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa, and Homeopathy, with Ayurveda having a documented history of 5000+ years.

Ayurveda

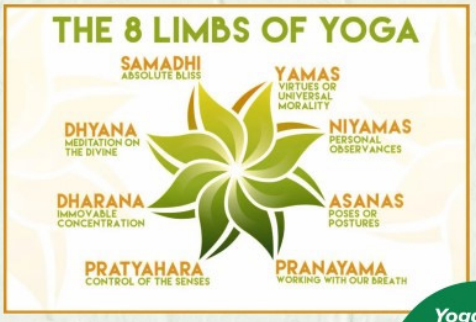
Lord Brahma is believed to be the 1st proponent of Ayurveda

- **Samhita Period (1000 BC):** Emerged as mature medical system
  - **Charaka Samhita:** Oldest and most authoritative text
  - **Sushruta Samhita:** Gives fundamental principles and therapeutic methods in eight specialties
- **Main Schools:**
  - **Punarvasu Atreya -** School of physicians
  - **Divodasa Dhanvantari -** School of surgeons

Branches of Ayurveda:

- Kayachikitsa (internal medicine)
- Shalya Tantra (surgery)
- Shalakya Tantra (disease of supra-clavicular origin)
- Kaumarabhritya (paediatrics)
- Agada Tantra (toxicology)
- Bhootavidya (psychiatry)
- Rasayana Tantra (rejuvenation and geriatrics)
- Vajikarana (eugenics & science of aphrodisiac)

Yoga & Naturopathy



Yoga first propounded by Maharishi Patanjali in systematic form Yogsutra

- **Naturopathy:** Healing with help of 5 natural elements - Earth, Water, Air, Fire and Ether
  - Based on theories of self-healing capacity of body and principles of healthy living
  - Encourages a **person-centred approach** rather than disease-centred

Unani

Pioneered in Greece, developed by Arabs as 7 principles (Umoor-e-Tabbiya)

- Based on the framework of teachings of **Buqrat** (Hippocrates) and **Jalinoos** (Galen)
  - Hippocratic theory of **four humors** viz. blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile
- **Recognised by WHO** and granted official status by India as an alternative health system

Siddha

Dates back to 10000 – 4000 BC; Siddhar Agasthiyar - Father of Siddha Medicine

- Preventive, promotive, curative, rejuvenative, and rehabilitative health care
- **4 Components:** Latro-chemistry, Medical practice, Yogic practice & Wisdom
- Diagnosis based on 3 humors **(Mukkuttram)** and 8 vital tests **(Ennvagai Thervu)**

Sowa Rigpa

Origin: Lord Buddha in India before 2500 years

- Traditional medicine in Himalayan regions of Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, etc.
- Recognised in India by Indian Medicine Central Council Act,1970 (As amended in 2010)

Homeopathy

German physician Dr. Christian F. S. Hahnemann codified its fundamental principles

- Medicines prepared mainly from natural substances (plant products, minerals, animal sources)
- Brought in India by European missionaries - 1810; official recognition - 1948
- **3 Key Principles:**
  - *Similia Similibus Curentur* (let likes be cured by likes)
  - Single Medicine
  - Minimum Dose

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NAVYA Initiative Launched in UP

Why in News?

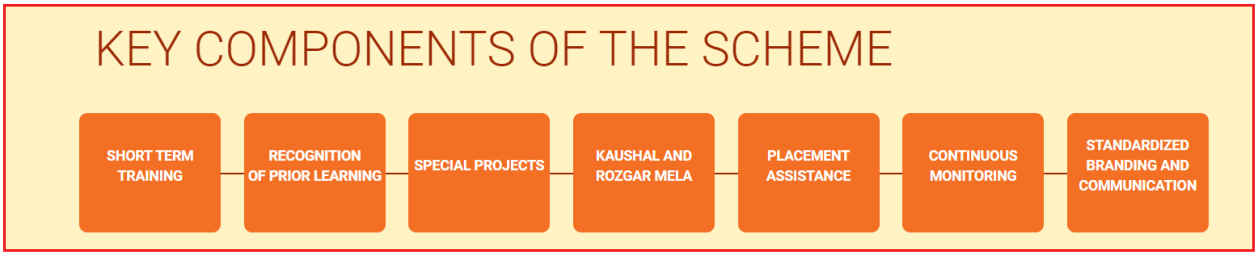
NAVYA – Nurturing Aspirations through Vocational Training for Young Adolescent Girls was launched in **Sonbhadra district of Uttar Pradesh** to **empower adolescent girls**.

Key Points

- NAVYA Initiative for Empowerment:
  - NAVYA is a joint initiative of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and the **Ministry of Women and Child Development.**
    - It will be **implemented across 27 aspirational districts** in 19 states, ensuring that marginalised and underserved regions are prioritised.
  - It is a **pilot initiative** aimed at equipping adolescent girls aged 16–18 years with a **minimum qualification of Class 10, with vocational training mainly in non-traditional job roles.**
    - It aligns with the **Viksit Bharat@2047 vision** and promotes women-led development and reinforces the Government's commitment to building a skilled, self-reliant, and inclusive workforce, positioning young **girls as agents of socio-economic transformation**.
  - The programme will draw upon schemes like Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) and other flagship skill development schemes.

Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY)

- The Skill India Mission was **launched by the Government in 2015**, under which the flagship scheme **PMKVY is implemented**.
- It aims at **vocational training and certification of Indian youth** for a better livelihood and respect in society.
- PMKVY is implemented by the National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC) under the guidance of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).



Lucknow Becomes Zero Net Waste City

Why in News?

Lucknow achieved a major milestone in urban waste management by launching a **700 MT fresh waste processing unit** at the **Shivri Plant**. With this, the city now scientifically processes all 2,000 MT of daily waste, becoming a **'zero net waste city.'**

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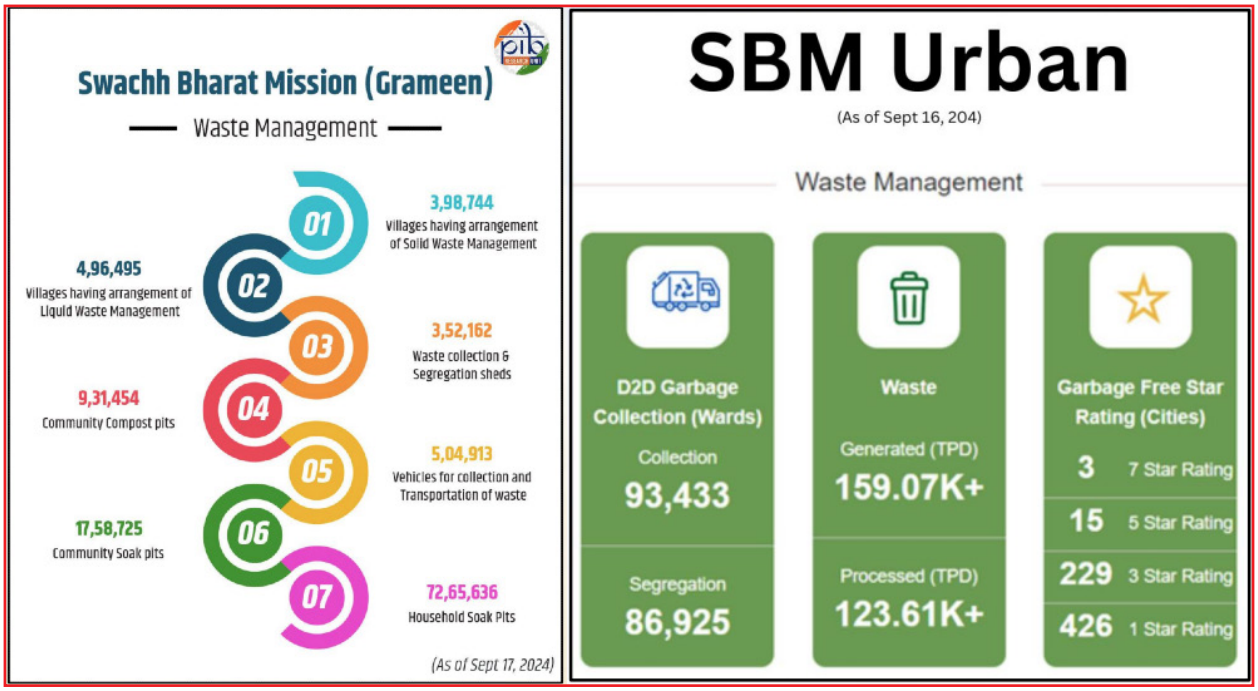
Key Points

- **Legacy Waste Remediation at Shivri:**
  - In 2022, the Shivri site faced a major challenge with 18.5 lakh MT of accumulated legacy waste.
  - To tackle this, the **Lucknow Municipal Corporation (LMC)** launched a Rs 106.18 crore remediation project, with Rs 96.53 crore funded under the **Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM-I).**
  - The project was awarded to Bhumi Green Energy, which began work in March 2024.
- **Circular Economy in Action:**
  - So far, 12.86 lakh MT of legacy waste has been processed into **Refuse-Derived Fuel (RDF), Bio-soil and Construction-grade debris.**
    - **RDF** comprises non-recyclable **dry waste like plastics, paper, and textiles**, has a high calorific value and can be **used for power generation** in waste-to-energy projects.
  - The reclaimed 25-acre site is now being repurposed for **Green zones, Composting pads and New waste infrastructure.**



- **Waste-to-Energy Plant in Pipeline:**
  - A **Detailed Project Report (DPR)** is being prepared for a Build-Own-Operate **Waste-to-Energy (WTE) plant.**
  - Till then, the existing Shivri facility, supported by **National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC)**, will serve as the city's interim waste processing solution.
- **Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM-I):**
  - It was launched on **2nd October 2014** by the **Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.**
  - It was also divided into **SBM-Gramin** for rural areas and **SBM-Urban** for urban centers.
  - **Aim:**
    - It aimed to make India **Open Defecation Free (ODF)** by constructing individual and community toilets and implementing waste management systems in schools and anganwadi toilets.

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- An area can be notified or **declared as ODF** if at any point of the day, not even a single person is found defecating in the open.

- SBM Urban 2.0:
  - It aims for **"Garbage Free Cities"** by establishing material recovery facilities, waste-to-energy plants, and recycling units, significantly boosting solid waste processing capacity by around 1.06 lakh tonnes per day (TPD) in urban areas.

Operation Conviction

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh has witnessed a transformation in its law and order situation through a strict **zero-tolerance policy, including Operation Conviction,** which focuses on securing swift convictions and tackling serious crimes.

Key Points

- **Operation Conviction & Impact:**
  - Launched in **July 2023**, **Operation Conviction** has emerged as a key strategy to ensure swift justice by **focusing on fast-track prosecution**, leading to significant improvements in conviction rates.
    - In crimes against children, several received the death penalty under **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012** and more than 600 were sentenced to life imprisonment.
    - Significant convictions have been secured in cases involving top criminals and notorious mafias, underscoring the **focus on organized crime**.
  - **POCSO Act, 2012:**
    - **About:**
- The **POCSO Act** was enacted to address **sexual exploitation and abuse of children**, defining a child as anyone **below 18 years.**
- It was enacted in consequence to India's ratification of the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1992).**
    - **Key Features:**
- The Act is **gender-neutral**, protecting **both boys and girls** from sexual abuse. It provides for **interim compensation** by Special Courts and **immediate relief** through the **Child Welfare Committee (CWC)** for urgent needs.
- A **support person** is appointed to assist the child through legal proceedings. **Section 23** ensures **confidentiality** by prohibiting disclosure of the victim's identity in the media.
  - **Organised Crime:**
    - Organised crime is defined as illegal activities carried out by groups or networks working together, often involving violence, corruption, or **related actions to gain financial or material benefits.**
    - Transnational organised crime (TOC) occurs when activities or groups **operate in multiple countries.**
    - Different forms of organised crime include:
- **Money Laundering, Drug Trafficking, Human Trafficking, Illicit Firearms Trafficking, Trafficking in Natural Resources, Fraudulent Medicines, Cybercrime and Identity Theft.**

National Sports Policy (NSP) 2025

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet has approved the **National Sports Policy (NSP) 2025**, replacing the **National Sports Policy of 2001**.

- The renewed vision anchored on **five key pillars** to transform India's sporting ecosystem.

Key Points

- **Five Key Pillars of NSP 2025**:
  - **Excellence on the Global Stage:**
    - **Talent Development:** Strengthens sports programs from the grassroots to elite levels through mechanisms for early talent identification and nurturing.
    - **Infrastructure & Competitions:** Promotes competitive leagues and nationwide

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tournaments alongside the development of sports infrastructure in both rural and urban areas.

- **Support Systems:** Establishes world-class systems for training, coaching, and athlete support, while enhancing the capacity and governance of National Sports Federations (NSFs).
- **Science & Technology:** Promotes sports science, medicine, and advanced technologies, along with the development of skilled sports personnel, including coaches, technical officials, and support staff.

Sports for Economic Development:

- **Tourism & Events:** Promotion of sports tourism and hosting international sporting events.
- **Industry & Innovation:** Strengthens the domestic sports goods manufacturing ecosystem while encouraging startups and entrepreneurship in the sports sector.
- **Investment & Collaboration:** Boosting private sector involvement via Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), and innovative funding models.

Sports for Social Development:

- **Inclusive Participation:** Targeted programs for women, tribal groups, underprivileged sections, and persons with disabilities.
- **Cultural Promotion:** Revitalization of indigenous and traditional Indian sports.
- **Career Integration:** Positioning sports as a viable career path through education integration, volunteering, and dual-career options.
- **Global Engagement:** Strengthening engagement with the Indian diaspora through sports initiatives.

Sports as a People's Movement:

- **Mass Participation:** Nationwide campaigns and community events to foster a fitness culture.
- **Fitness Standards:** Introduction of fitness indices for educational institutions and workplaces.
- **Access to Facilities:** Enhancing universal access to sports infrastructure and opportunities.

Integration with Education:

- **Curriculum Development (Aligned with NEP 2020):** Inclusion of sports in formal school education.
- **Educator Training:** Specialized training programs for educators and physical education teachers.

Strategic Framework:

- **Governance:** Robust legal and regulatory framework to ensure transparency and efficiency.
- **Funding & Private Sector Support:** Engagement of private entities through innovative financing and CSR models.
- **Technology & Innovation:** Adoption of Artificial Intelligence (AI), data analytics, and emerging technologies for monitoring and performance enhancement.
- Monitoring & Evaluation: National Monitoring Framework with Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), benchmarks, and time-bound goals.
- **Model Policy for States:** NSP 2025 to act as a blueprint for states and UTs to align their sports policies.
- **Whole-of-Government Approach:** Integration of sports objectives into all government departments and schemes.

Uttar Pradesh Sports Policy 2023

Uttar Pradesh's New Sports Policy 2023 focuses on holistic athlete development, institutional integration, and robust infrastructure to strengthen the state's sporting ecosystem.

Key Points:

- **Athlete Development:** Emphasizes physical fitness and training with tailored, tier-based support for athletes at grassroots, developing, and elite levels.

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- **Institutional Linkages:** Encourages the creation of new sports institutions and fosters collaboration with private academies and colleges.
- **Infrastructure & Funding:** Provides financial assistance to under-resourced sports bodies, promotes infrastructure development through PPPs—including 14 sport-specific Centres of Excellence—and plans to build stadiums and open gyms in rural areas.
- **Governance & Facilities:** Establishes a dedicated State Sports Authority and undertakes mapping of sports facilities and coaching resources across the state.
- **Eklavya Sports Fund:** Provides up to ₹5 lakh health insurance per registered player and supports overall player treatment and welfare.
- **Khelo India Integration:** Focus on leveraging Khelo India University Games for talent identification and facility development.

New EV Park in Uttar Pradesh

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh** government is going to establish a Rs 700 crore **Electric Vehicle (EV) park in Kanpur** as part of its **Kanpur Metropolitan Development Vision 2030**.

- Spread across 500 acres, the ambitious project will be implemented by the **Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA).**

Note: UPSIDA is the primary government agency responsible for **industrial and infrastructure development in Uttar Pradesh.**

Key Points

- **About the Project:**
  - **Aim:** The proposed EV park will **boost the local supply chain, promote indigenous manufacturing** under the **'Make in UP' and 'Made in UP' initiatives,** and position Kanpur as a hub of industrial innovation in the global EV landscape.
  - **Strategic Location:** The EV park will be set up near Bhimsen in Kanpur, strategically positioned along the **Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC).**
    - This location offers a logistical edge due to its **connectivity to key rail and road networks,** ensuring **seamless transport of raw materials and finished goods.**
  - **Integration with UP's Defence and Industrial Corridors:** Kanpur, already a significant node in the **UP Defence Industrial Corridor**, will benefit from this initiative by strengthening its industrial base.
    - The **park's manufacturing capabilities will complement the state's larger economic objectives**, which include boosting defense manufacturing, innovation, and regional development.
    - Kanpur constitutes **among the six nodes of the UP Defence Industrial Corridor (UPDIC).** The other five nodes are Lucknow, Agra, Aligarh, Chitrakoot and Jhansi.
  - **Public-Private Partnership (PPP) Model:** The EV park will be developed under a **PPP model**, aligning private sector efficiency with public infrastructure support.
  - **Advanced Manufacturing Infrastructure:** The park will house state-of-the-art manufacturing units for essential EV components, including:
    - **Electric motors**, **Lithium-ion cells**, and core electronic systems used in electric vehicles.
  - **Dedicated R&D Centre:** A core feature of the park will be a dedicated **Research and Development (R&D) centre** focused on innovation in EV technologies.
    - This will drive technological advancement at the regional level while contributing to global progress in electric mobility.
  - **Integrated EV Components Cluster:** An integrated cluster will be developed within the park to support the manufacturing of EV components.

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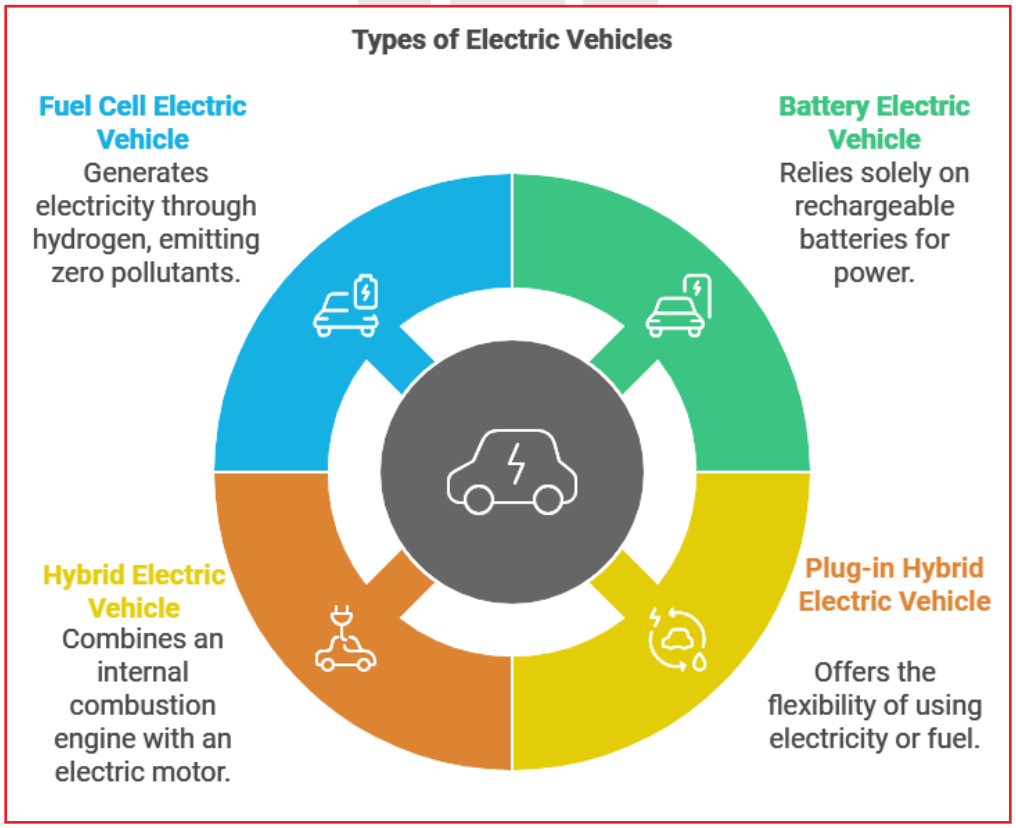
- This ecosystem will empower **Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)**, **Startups**, and local entrepreneurs.
- The initiative aims to deepen local participation in the EV value chain and stimulate enterprise-driven innovation.

- **Employment Generation:** The project is expected to generate both direct and indirect **employment**, driving economic development in the region.

- **About Electric Vehicles:**
  - **About:**
    - EVs are vehicles that **use one or more electric motors for propulsion**, instead of traditional **internal combustion engines (ICEs)** that burn gasoline or diesel.
    - Though the concept of electric vehicles has been around for a long time, it has drawn a considerable amount of interest in the past decade amid a **rising carbon footprint and other environmental impacts of fuel-based vehicles.**
  - **Types of Electric Vehicles:**
    - **Battery Electric Vehicles (BEVs):** Solely rely on battery power for propulsion and produce zero tailpipe emissions.
    - **Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicles (PHEVs):** Combine an electric motor with a gasoline engine. They can be charged externally and run on battery power for a limited range, then switch to the gasoline engine for longer journeys.
    - **Hybrid Electric Vehicles (HEVs):** Use both an electric motor and a gasoline engine, but the battery cannot be charged directly by plugging in.
- The battery is charged by the gasoline engine or **through regenerative braking.**



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EV Policies in India

- **2010:** India incentivizes EVs through a Rs 95-crore scheme by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), offering up to **20% incentives on ex-factory prices. Withdrawn in March 2012.**
- **2013:** Launch of **'National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP) 2020'** to boost EV adoption, address energy security, and reduce vehicular pollution. Largely remained unimplemented.
- **2015:** Union Budget announces **FAME scheme** with a Rs 75 crore outlay to incentivize clean-fuel technology cars, **targeting 7 million EVs by 2020.**
- **2017:** The Indian Transport Ministry aims **for 100% electric cars by 2030.** The plan was scaled down to **30% after industry concerns.**
- **2019:** Union Cabinet approves **Rs 10,000-crore FAME-II scheme** to accelerate EV adoption with upfront purchase incentives and charging infrastructure.
- **2023:** The 36th GST Council Meeting decided to **reduce the GST rate on electric vehicles from 12% to 5%** and chargers or charge stations from **18% to 5%** to boost the electric vehicle market.
- **2025:** The Center has issued detailed guidelines for the **Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Electric Passenger Cars in India (SPMEPCI)** to boost domestic EV production.

India's First Equine Disease-Free Compartment (EDFC)

Why in News?

The **World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)** has **officially recognized India's first Equine Disease-Free Compartment (EDFC)** at the Remount Veterinary Corps (RVC) Centre and College in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh.

Key Points

- **Equine Disease-Free Compartment (EDFC):**
  - **Definition:**
    - An EDFC is a specially designated, **biosecure zone for horses** that ensures **protection from serious equine diseases**, enabling safe movement for sports, breeding, or trade.
    - It is established under the **Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying**.
  - **Features:**
    - The EDFC is part of a wider initiative to establish disease-free zones across sectors.
- India is also working on creating **Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI)**-Free Compartments for the safe export of poultry products.
  - The EDFC follows detailed SOPs covering **disease prevention, pest control, security, hygiene, health monitoring, waste management, and constant surveillance**, in line with global best practices.
  - The **approval aligns with WOAH's Terrestrial Animal Health Code**, which outlines science-based guidelines for managing disease-free animal sub-populations through strict biosecurity and care practices.
  - **Certified Disease-Free:**
    - The EDFC has been declared free from major equine diseases such as **Equine Infectious Anemia, Equine Influenza, Equine Piroplasmosis, Glanders**, and **Surra.**
- India has also remained free from **African Horse Sickness since 2014.**
- **Significance:**
  - **International Participation:** Indian sport horses can now compete in international equestrian events, enhancing India's visibility and participation in the global equestrian arena.
  - **Boost to Equine Trade and Breeding:** The EDFC will strengthen India's position in the equine trade and breeding sectors, opening up global markets for Indian horses.
  - **Animal Health Excellence:** India's commitment to strengthening animal health systems with globally accepted practices positions it as a leader in veterinary excellence.

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World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)

- WOAH is the leading international body dedicated to animal health and welfare.
- **Established in 1924** as the Office International des Epizooties (OIE), the organisation **adopted its current name in May 2003.**
- It operates as an intergovernmental organisation, with members from around the world collaborating on shared goals in animal health.
- It works to improve global animal health and is **headquartered in Paris, France.**
- As of 2025, WOAH had **183 member countries**, including India.
- It creates guidelines, such as the **Terrestrial Animal Health Code**, to help countries prevent disease entry.
- The World Trade Organization (WTO) acknowledges WOAH standards as international sanitary guidelines.

Uttar Pradesh Targets Global Manufacturing Shift

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh (UP) is intensifying its global outreach to **attract multinational manufacturers,** particularly through the **China+1 strategy**, as part of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's vision to transform the state into a USD 1 trillion economy.

Key Points

- **About China+1 Strategy:**
  - It refers to the **global trend** where companies diversify their manufacturing and supply chains by establishing operations in countries **other than China.**
  - This approach **aims to mitigate risks associated with over-reliance on a single country,** especially in light of geopolitical tensions and supply chain disruptions.
- **Global Outreach to Attract Investment:**
  - As part of its China+1 strategy, **Invest UP**, the state's nodal investment promotion agency, is leading a global outreach initiative.
  - The campaign includes roadshows and strategic business engagements across the United States, Europe, and the United Kingdom to **attract Fortune 500 companies and global industrial leaders.**
  - The outreach will feature Business-to-Government (B2G) meetings and roundtable discussions in global business hubs such as New York, London, Paris, among others.
  - These events are being organised in collaboration with Indian embassies and leading trade associations like **US-India Business Council (USIBC)**, Confederation of Indian Industries CII, and Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI).
- **Sectoral Growth and Key Investments in UP:**
  - **Electronics:** Rs 3,700 crore HCL–Foxconn OSAT investment marks a milestone in the state's semiconductor ambitions.
  - **Textiles:** UP is strengthening its textile value chain through PM MITRA Mega Textile Park and mini parks focused on synthetic, defence, and medical textiles.
  - **Electric Vehicles (EVs):** Under the EV Policy 2023, UP targets 36 Gigawatt hours (GWh) battery production capacity by 2028.
  - **Digital Infrastructure:** Noida–Greater Noida is emerging as India's leading data centre hub, with plans to develop an **integrated AI City.**

Invest UP

- **About:**
  - Invest UP, formerly known as **Udyog Bandhu**, is the **investment promotion and facilitation agency** of the **Government of Uttar Pradesh.**
  - It is dedicated to **attracting new investments and resolving issues** faced by existing and upcoming industries in the state.
- **Vision:**
  - Invest UP envisions transforming UP into India's most preferred investment destination.

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- It aims to serve as an **effective driver of investment policies and provide a world-class business environment and infrastructure,** thereby fostering economic growth and enhancing the quality of life for the people of the state.

- **Mission:**
  - As **state's Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency**, Invest UP aims at attracting investment in the state through proactive contribution in policy formulation for rapid development of industries and infrastructure in the State.
  - The organization facilitates the resolution of problems of prospective and existing entrepreneurs by **providing them the advisory services**.

HC Rejects Petitions Against UP Government's School Merger Order

Why in News?

The **Allahabad** High Court dismissed petitions challenging the **state government's order for the merger of government-run primary schools and upper primary schools.**

- The petitioners argued that the move **violates** the Right to Education (RTE) Act 2009**,** hinders children's education, and increases social inequality.

Key Points

- **High Court Decision:**
  - The court ruled that **policy decisions cannot be challenged** unless they are unconstitutional or arbitrary.
    - The court asserted that pairing (merger) of schools **does not violate** Article 21A **of the Constitution.**
- Article 21A guarantees the **right to education as a fundamental right** for children between the ages of 6 and 14 years.
    - The government's step is constitutional, legally valid, and intended to enhance educational quality and resource efficiency.
  - **Background:**
    - In June 2025, the **Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Department** issued an order stating that **schools with fewer than 50 students would be merged** into nearby schools from July 2025.
    - The government aimed to improve the quality of education and ensure optimal use of resources by shifting these students to upper primary or composite schools.
- **Right to Education (RTE) Act, 2009:**
  - The RTE Act aims to provide primary education to all children **aged 6 to 14 years.**
  - **Section 12(1)(c)** mandates that **non-minority private unaided schools should reserve at least 25% of seats in entry-level grades for children from economically weaker** and disadvantaged backgrounds.
  - It also makes **provisions for a non-admitted child** to be admitted to an age appropriate class.
  - It also states about the **sharing of financial and other responsibilities** between the Central and State Governments.
    - Education in the Indian constitution is a **concurrent issue** and both centre and states can legislate on the issue.
  - It lays down the **norms and standards** related to: **Pupil Teacher Ratios (PTRs)**, Buildings and infrastructure, School-working days, Teacher-working hours.
  - It also **provides for the prohibition of deployment of teachers for non-educational work**, other than decennial census, elections to local authority, state legislatures and parliament, and disaster relief.
  - It provides for the **appointment of teachers with the requisite entry and academic qualifications.**

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- **It prohibits:**
  - Physical punishment and mental harassment
  - Screening procedures for admission of children
  - Capitation fee
  - Private tuition by teachers
  - Running of schools without recognition

ASMITA 2025

Why in News?

The Union Sports Minister launched the **2025 season of the ASMITA League** in Modinagar, Uttar Pradesh. The season started with a two-day weightlifting event.

- **Tokyo Olympics silver medallist Mirabai Chanu** was among the host of dignitaries who were present at the inauguration of the ASMITA weightlifting league.

Key Points

- **ASMITA:**
  - **About:**
    - **ASMITA (Achieving Sports Milestone by Inspiring Women)** is part of **Khelo India's mission** to promote gender-neutral sports culture.
    - The **Sports Authority of India (SAI)** supports National Sports Federations in conducting these leagues across multiple age groups at the zonal and national levels.
    - Launched in 2021, ASMITA aims to **boost women's participation in sports** and act as a nationwide talent identification platform.
- The mission is to create opportunities at every level, spot talent, and nurture it.
  - **ASMITA in FY 2025–26:**
    - In the financial year 2025–26, a **total of 852 ASMITA leagues** are scheduled to be conducted across 15 different sports disciplines.
    - These leagues, spread across states and Union Territories, will involve over 70,000 female athletes.
- In comparison, the previous season saw 550 leagues across 27 disciplines, with 53,101 female participants.
- School Sports and National Calendar Integration:
  - Under the **National Sports Policy 2025**, integrated with the **National Education Policy (NEP),** the government is promoting school-level sports.
    - These efforts will be reflected in the Khelo India national sports calendar, ensuring continuous opportunities for youth.

Khelo India Initiative

- **About:**
  - It is a national-level multi-disciplinary sports competition for school and college students in India.
  - The **Prime Minister** launched the first edition of the Khelo India School Games at the Indira Gandhi Arena in New Delhi in the year 2018.
  - In the year 2019, **its name was changed to Khelo India Youth Games.**
  - It aims to promote sports culture and recognise sporting talent at the grassroots level.
- **Khelo India Youth Games 2025:**
  - It was organised in five districts of **Bihar (Patna, Rajgir, Begusarai, Gaya and Bhagalpur)**.
    - The three major events – **gymnastics, shooting and cycling** – were held in **New Delhi.**
  - **Gajasimha** was the mascot of the 2025 year's game.
  - The 12-day event took place across 27 sports, with a total of **285 gold medals** awarded.

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35th Report on CPGRAMS

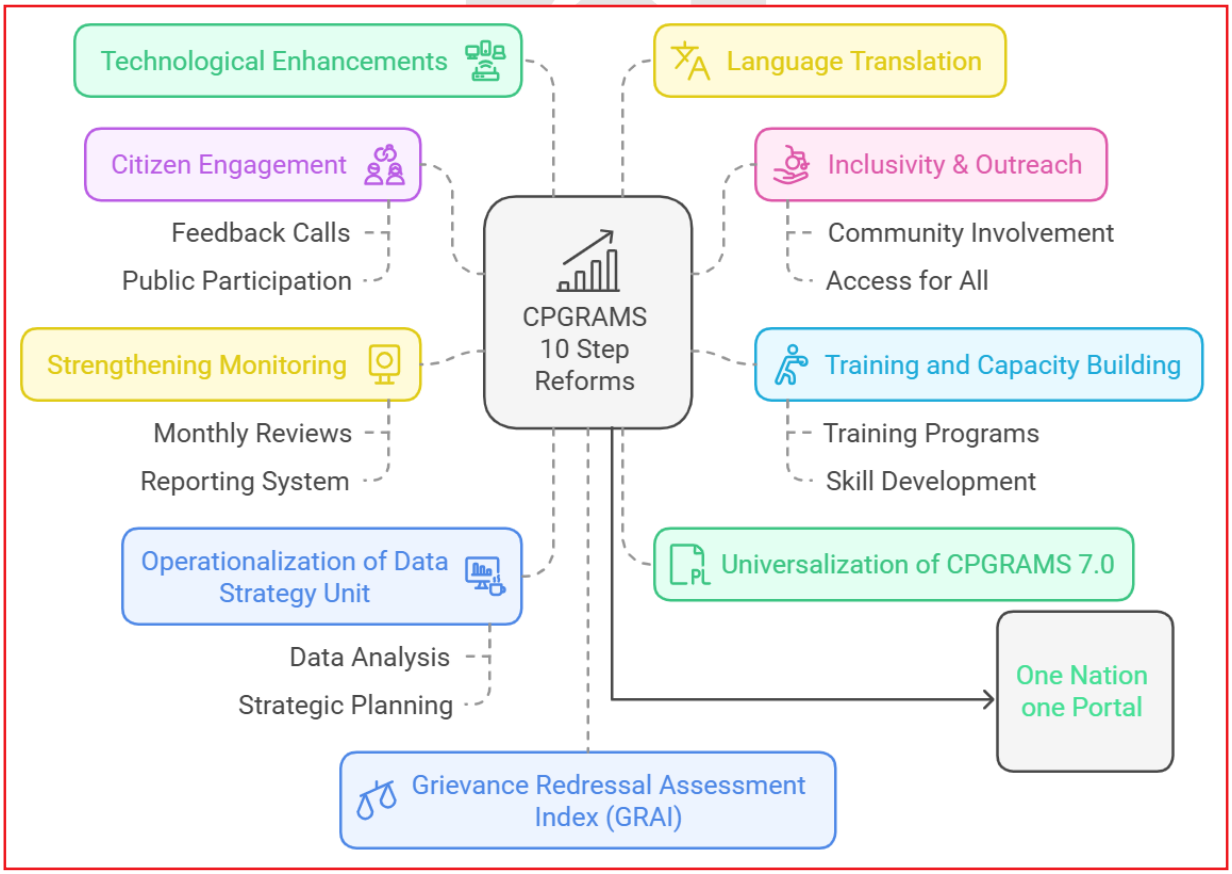
Why in News?

The **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG)** released the **35th monthly report** of the **Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)** for States and Union Territories for June 2025.

- The report provides an **analysis of public grievance types and their redressal by States and UTs**; in this edition, **Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest number of disposals** (25,870 cases), **followed by Gujarat** (3,986 cases).

Key Points

- **About CPGRAMS:**
  - CPGRAMS is a **24/7 online platform** developed by the **National Informatics Centre**, for citizens to lodge grievances related to service delivery.
  - It was launched by the DARPG under the **Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions.**
  - It is a **single portal** connected to all the Ministries/Departments of the Government of India and States.
  - **CPGRAMS** also provides an **appeal facility** to the citizens if they are not satisfied with the resolution by the Grievance Officer.
  - Issues not addressed for redressal include **Right to Information (RTI)** matters, court-related or sub-judice matters, religious matters, and grievances of government employees related to their service issues.



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- **Sevottam Guidelines for 2025–26:**
  - In collaboration with **ASCI Hyderabad, the DARPG** has developed the **Sevottam Guidelines for 2025–26,** accompanied by a comprehensive training curriculum.
  - These guidelines aim to **standardize grievance redressal processes** across government departments and further improve the quality of public services.

Sevottam Model

- **About:**
  - The **2nd Administrative Reforms Commission (ARC)**, in its **12th report titled "Citizen-Centric Administration – The Heart of Governance"**, emphasized the need to make government institutions more transparent, accountable, and citizen-friendly.
    - To implement this vision, the DARPG introduced the **'Sevottam' framework.**
  - The Sevottam Model serves as a **structured framework to improve public service delivery** in India.
  - It **promotes citizen-centric governance** by fostering transparency, accountability, and continual enhancement of services in public institutions.
- **Key Components of the Sevottam Model:**
  - **Citizen Charters:**
    - Public organisations publish **Citizen Charters** to declare the services they offer, the service delivery timelines, and citizens' entitlements.
    - These charters empower citizens to demand better services and hold service providers accountable.
  - **Public Grievance Redressal:**
    - The model includes a strong grievance redressal system to resolve complaints effectively.
    - It focuses on ensuring citizen satisfaction, regardless of the outcome of the grievance.
  - **Excellence in Service Delivery:**
    - This component ensures efficient service delivery through capacity building, performance management, and a culture of continuous improvement.
- **The 7-Step Sevottam Approach:**
  - **Define Services:** Public agencies must clearly identify and define the services offered by each department or unit.
  - **Set Standards:** Authorities should lay down measurable and time-bound service standards for each identified service.
  - **Develop Capacity:** Departments need to build institutional and human resource capacity to meet service delivery benchmarks.
  - **Perform:** Internal systems and processes must ensure that individuals and departments consistently meet the prescribed standards.
  - **Monitor:** Organisations must regularly track performance against defined benchmarks.
  - **Evaluate:** Authorities should carry out periodic evaluations, incorporating citizen feedback to assess service quality.
  - **Continuous Improvement:** Based on monitoring and evaluation, organisations should introduce improvements and reforms to enhance service delivery over time.

Uttar Pradesh Agritech Innovation Hub

Why in News?

The Union Education Minister inaugurated the **Uttar Pradesh Agritech Innovation Hub and the Agritech Startup and Technology Showcase** at **Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel University of Agriculture and Technology (SVPUAT)**, Meerut, Uttar Pradesh.

Key Points

- **Integration of Technology and Natural Farming:**
  - The importance of chemical-free, **natural farming** was highlighted, with a call for technology to bridge the gap between the field and the market.

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- This initiative seeks to enhance sustainability and precision farming through technology such as IoT-enabled sensors, smart irrigation, and automation technologies, which can significantly contribute to the agricultural economy, especially in North India.

- **Focus on Skill Development and Rural Youth Empowerment:**
  - The event also stressed that the Agritech Innovation Hub is a collaborative ecosystem where farmers, technologists, and startups can co-create solutions for the future.
  - The hub aims to empower rural youth and farmers to embrace the agritech revolution.
- **Technological Collaboration:**
  - An MoU was signed between IIT Ropar and SVPUAT for collaboration in agritech research and innovation.
  - The hub is equipped with advanced data analytics platforms and **real-time monitoring systems to facilitate data-driven decision-making for farmers.**
- **Training and Capacity Building Initiatives:**
  - The initiative will also focus on training and capacity building through workshops and sessions for farmers and rural youth.
  - Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) and Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) will play an essential role in training the farming community, ensuring effective technology adoption and knowledge transfer.

Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK)

- KVK is an integral part of the National Agricultural Research System (NARS).
- The **mandate** of KVK is technology assessment and demonstration for its application and capacity development.
- It aims at assessment of location specific technology modules in agriculture and allied enterprises, through technology assessment, refinement and demonstrations.

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- KVKs also produce quality technological products **(seed, planting material, bio-agents, livestock)** and make it available to farmers.
- The KVK scheme is **100% financed by the Government of India** and the KVKs are sanctioned to Agricultural Universities, ICAR institutes, related Government Departments and **Non-Government Organizations (NGOs)** working in Agriculture.

Farmers Producer Organisations (FPOs)

- An FPO is a type of **producer organisation (PO)** with **farmers** as its members, and its promotion is supported by the **Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC)**.
  - The **FPOs** were inspired by economist **YK Alagh's recommendation (2002)** to amend the **Companies Act, 1956**.
  - FPOs can be registered under the **Companies Act, 2013**, the **Societies Registration Act, 1860**, or as Public Trusts under the **Indian Trusts Act, 1882.**
- A Producer Organisation is a group of **producers, agricultural, non-farm, or artisan**, that can take **legal forms** like producer companies or **cooperatives, sharing profits** among members.

Dhammachakra Pravartana Divas

Why in News?

Ashadha Purnima was commemorated with deep **spiritual devotion at Sarnath** by the **International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)**, in collaboration with the **Ministry of Culture** and the **Mahabodhi Society of India**.

- The occasion marks ***Dhammachakra Pravartana Divas***, celebrating Lord Buddha's first sermon.

Key Points

- **About the Buddhism:**
  - It is a spiritual tradition **founded in the 6th century BCE** by **Siddhartha Gautama**, who is **known as the Buddha**.
  - It originated in India and has since spread across Asia and the world.
  - The **central aim of Buddhism** is to overcome suffering and attain nirvana, a state of liberation and inner peace. This is achieved by following the **Four Noble Truths**:
    - Life involves suffering (dukkha).
    - Suffering is caused by desire and attachment.
    - Suffering can end.
    - The path to end suffering is the Eightfold Path.
  - The **Eightfold Path** includes right understanding, intention, speech, action, livelihood, effort, mindfulness, and concentration.
  - Buddhism emphasizes ethical conduct, mental discipline, and wisdom.
  - Key concepts include karma (the law of moral causation), rebirth, and meditation.
  - There are three major branches of Buddhism:
    - Theravāda (practiced mainly in Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia)
    - Mahāyāna (practiced mainly in China, Korea, and Japan)
    - Vajrayāna (practiced mainly in Tibet and Mongolia)
  - Important texts include the **Tripiṭaka (Pali Canon)** and various **Mahāyāna Sūtras**.

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- The **Dharma Wheel** is a common symbol representing the teachings of the Buddha.

Major Buddhist Sites in Uttar Pradesh:

- **Kapilvastu (Siddharthnagar)**: Childhood home of Buddha; where he saw the Four Sights that led to renunciation.
- **Sarnath**: Site of Buddha's **first sermon** and formation of the Buddhist Sangha.
- **Shravasti**: Buddha spent 25 rainy seasons here; site of Jetavana Monastery and Twin Miracle.
- **Sankisa**: Believed to be the place where Buddha descended from heaven after teaching his mother.
- **Kaushambi**: Location of Ghositarama Monastery; important for Buddha's teachings and Sangha training.
- **Kushinagar**: Site of Buddha's Mahaparinirvana (death) and cremation under the Sal trees.
- **Ramgram (Maharajganj)**: Contains the only untouched stupa with Buddha's relics.
- **Devadaha**: Maternal home of Buddha's mother, stepmother, and wife; place of early teachings.

UP Prohibition Of Unlawful Conversion Of Religion Act, 2021

Why in News?

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has registered a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 related to an **alleged religious conversion racket** exposed in Balrampur, Uttar Pradesh.

- ED launched its probe after an FIR filed under the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Religious Conversion Act, 2021.

Key Points

- **Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, 2021:**
  - It aims to regulate **religious conversions and prohibit conversions achieved by misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement, or any fraudulent means.**
  - Illegal conversion **carries a standard punishment of imprisonment and a fine**.
    - Enhanced punishment of imprisonment and a fine applies if the victim is a woman, a minor, or belongs to a Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe.
  - Repeat offenders may face up to double the relevant punishment. **Any marriage conducted for the purpose of unlawful conversion is declared void.**
  - Earlier, the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly passed the **Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion (Amendment) Bill, 2024**, significantly altering the original 2021 anti-conversion law by making its provisions more stringent.
- **Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) 2002:**
  - **Key Provisions:**
    - **Defines money laundering** as concealment, possession, acquisition, or use of proceeds from crime, projecting them as legitimate assets.
    - **Empowers the Enforcement Directorate (ED)** to investigate offenses, conduct raids, and attach proceeds of crime.
    - **Mandates financial institutions** to report suspicious transactions to the **Financial Intelligence Unit – India (FIU-IND)** for scrutiny.
    - **Establishes Special Courts** to expedite trials of money laundering cases, ensuring legal deterrence.
    - **Includes a wide range of predicate offenses** under the **Schedule of Offenses**, covering economic offenses, corruption, drug trafficking, and terrorism.
  - **Effectiveness:**
    - **Stronger deterrence:** The PMLA deters financial crimes through strict investigation, prosecution, and asset confiscation in major fraud and economic offenses.
    - **Enhanced international cooperation:** India collaborates with Interpol and the FATF (Financial Action Task Force) to track illicit funds.

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- **Better financial monitoring:** Banks and financial institutions are obligated to implement Know Your Customer (KYC) norms, reducing money laundering risks.

Key Constitutional Provisions Related to Religious Conversion

- **Article 25:** Guarantees freedom of conscience and the right to freely profess, practice, and propagate religion, subject to public order, morality, and health. The state can regulate or restrict any economic, financial, political, or other secular activity associated with religious practice.
  - It also **allows for the regulation of secular activities associated with religious practice** and the throwing open of Hindu religious institutions to all classes and sections of Hindus.
- **Article 26:** Entitles every religious denomination to manage its own religious affairs, subject to public order, morality, and health.
- **Articles 27 to 30:** Guarantee freedom to manage religious affairs, contribute monetarily to any religion, and set up and administer educational institutions.

'Learning By Doing' Programme

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government launched the **Learning by Doing (LBD) programme** to transform education in government schools by integrating hands-on learning.

Key Points

- **About the LBD Programme:**
  - The programme provides practical training to students of **Classes 6 to 8** in fields such as woodwork, metalwork, energy and environment, agriculture and horticulture, and health and nutrition, in line with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
  - The pilot phase of the programme, conducted in 60 schools across 15 districts, trained 5,937 students in various trades. **The initiative significantly boosted student attendance and engagement**.
  - In 2025–26, the government plans to expand the programme to 3,288 more schools **under Samagra Shiksha and PM SHRI schemes.**
  - The initiative, implemented under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, reflects the vision of linking education with employability and life skills.
  - To implement the programme effectively, the Basic Education Department provided four-day multi-skilling training to science and mathematics teachers.
  - With technical support from UNICEF and **Vigyan Ashram**, the state developed a teacher manual with 60 skill-based activities, which has been approved by SCERT (State Council of Educational Research and Training).
- **Expansion to Modern Skill Labs Across Schools:**
  - In the academic year 2024–25, the government will set up modern LBD labs in 2,274 upper primary and composite schools across all 75 districts.
  - Each lab will feature **modern tools and equipment,** and School Management Committees (SMCs) will receive raw materials and consumables to support these hands-on activities.

Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan

- **About:** Introduced in the Union Budget 2018-19, **Samagra Shiksha** is a comprehensive program covering education from **pre-nursery to Class 12** to ensure equitable learning outcomes.
- **Key Features:**
  - **Integration of Schemes:** It subsumes three earlier schemes:
    - **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA):** It focuses on universal primary education.
    - **Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA):** It aimed at secondary education.

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- **Teacher Education (TE):** It focused on training teachers.
- **Sector-Wide Development Approach:** It streamlines implementation across **all levels (state, district, and sub-district)** instead of fragmented project-based objectives.
- **Alignment with SDGs:** Ensures free, equitable, and quality education (**SDG 4.1**) while eliminating gender disparities and ensuring access for vulnerable groups (**SDG 4.5**).

- **Implementation:** It is a **centrally sponsored scheme (CSS)** implemented through a **single State Implementation Society (SIS)** at the **State/UT level.**
  - SIS is a **state-registered body** implementing **CSS and development programs**.

PM-SHRI Scheme

- **About:**
  - The **Prime Minister's Schools for Rising India (PM SHRI) Scheme** is a **centrally sponsored initiative**, launched in 2022, by the Government of India aimed at establishing over **14,500 PM SHRI Schools** by **enhancing existing schools** to showcase the implementation of the **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.**
- **Objective:**
  - The primary objective is to create an **inclusive and nurturing environment** that **promotes the well-being and safety** of every student, **offering diverse learning experiences** and access to **quality infrastructure and resources.**

UP Issued Standard Operating Procedure for Fairs

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh** government has launched its **first detailed Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)** for fairs expecting over 5 lakh visitors.

- Approved events will get Rs 25 lakh to Rs 1.5 crore, based on footfall.

Key Points

- **About the Issued SOP:** The **Uttar Pradesh Urban Development Department** has issued a detailed SOP for **fairs organised by urban local bodies.**
  - **Aim:** The SOP aims to **standardise the organisation of state fairs** by ensuring proper amenities, safety measures, and management systems.
    - It seeks to **bring transparency and structure** in declaring fairs as "state fairs" and in fund allocation and utilisation.
    - The SOP **sets benchmarks for** urban amenities for visitors, cleanliness and sanitation, transparent allotment of shops and sites, administrative planning and fair operations, financial and crowd management, fair promotion and publicity.
- **Detailed Project Reports and Verification:**
  - Authorities will prepare a **detailed project report (DPR)** both before and after each fair, followed by third-party verification to ensure effective planning and management at venues that witness large gatherings.
  - Organisers must submit an **annual report to the Divisional Commissioner** within one month of the fair's completion.
- **Role of District-Level Committees:**
  - Special committees headed by district magistrates will oversee planning and execution.
  - These committees will include representatives from the police, municipal bodies, Public Works Department, **tourism**, and other departments.
  - Committees will evaluate the **fair's religious, mythological, or historical significance**, timing, and inter-state or international relevance.

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UP to Develop Historical Buildings into Heritage Hotels

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh Tourism Department** will renovate 11 historical buildings, including ancient forts, and transform them into heritage hotels, cultural centres, or museums through the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model to boost tourism in the state.

Key Points

- **About the Project:**
  - The project aims to **preserve Uttar Pradesh's architectural and cultural heritage** while creating employment opportunities for thousands across the state.
  - Under this initiative, **private players will design, develop, and restore** the identified heritage sites and hand them over to the government for further use.
  - This heritage revival programme forms part of a larger state strategy to **blend cultural conservation with modern development goals**, ensuring both heritage protection and local growth.
  - The initiative seeks to **revive the Bundelkhand region's economy** through heritage-based tourism, encouraging sustainable development anchored in cultural identity.
- **Key Sites Identified for Renovation:**

Site	Location
Talbehat Fort	Lalitpur
Rangarh and Bhuragarh Fort	Banda
Wazirganj Baradari	Gonda
Alambagh Bhawan, Gulistan-e-Eram, and Darshan Vilas	Lucknow
Tikait Rai Baradari	Kanpur
Mastani Mahal and Senapati Mahal	Mahoba
Tahrauli Fort	Jhansi
Sitaram Mahal/Kotwan Fort	Mathura

UP Tourism Policy 2022

- **About:** The primary objectives of tourism policy are to ensure sustainable development, enhance visitor satisfaction, boost economic growth, protect cultural and natural resources, and foster community inclusivity and participation
- **Attractive Financial Incentives:** The policy offers generous subsidies and financial support, including:
  - Capital investment subsidies ranging from 10–25% (capped at Rs 2–40 crore based on investment size).
  - 5% interest subsidy on bank loans up to Rs 5 crore for 5 years.
  - 100% exemption on stamp duty, land conversion fees, and employment-linked EPF reimbursements.
  - Additional incentives target Tier 2+ locations, women entrepreneurs, SC/ST/backward classes, and focus tourism destinations.
- **Focus on Eco, Heritage & Niche Tourism:** The policy promotes developing:
  - Eco-tourism circuits like wildlife sanctuaries, camping sites, trekking, and nature walks
  - Heritage, MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Events), wellness, and amusement parks through PPP models.
  - Integration with themed circuits—Ramayana, Krishna, Buddhist, Mahabharata, and Shakti Peeth.
  - Uttar Pradesh recorded 65 crore tourists in 2024, driven by the development of major religious and heritage sites like Ayodhya, Kashi, and Mathura, as well as various ancient temples and pilgrimage centres.
- **Investment Facilitation & Global Promotion:** UP aims to attract Rs 5,000 crore annually by:
  - Establishing a Tourism Investor Facilitation Cell for market research, approvals, and investment support
  - Participation in roadshows, international tourism events, and collaborative branding—placing UP on the global tourism map.

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Uttar Pradesh Partners With UNDP for Improved Disaster Resilience

Why in News?

A Memorandum of Association (MoA) was signed between the **Relief Commissioner's Office of Uttar Pradesh** and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to work collaboratively on making disaster management in the state more effective and scientific.

Key Points

About Memorandum of Association (MoA)

- **Objective:**
  - It aims at implementing disaster risk reduction programmes, strengthening the state's institutional capacity, and developing a **multi-level disaster management** system based on a technical approach.
  - This comprehensive disaster management program will empower the state with a robust disaster risk reduction framework and **enhance preparedness for potential** disasters.
  - It will introduce disaster risk reduction measures across the state, aiming to create a **more inclusive, accountable,** and effective disaster management system.
- **Program Highlights:**
  - Creation of disaster management plans for **all** 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh and 15 key state departments.
  - Detailed risk assessments and **vulnerability studies for 20 major cities**, along with the creation of urban disaster management plans for these cities.
  - Preparation of **detailed project reports** for 10 state departments.
- **Technical Improvements:**
  - **Strengthening and integrating** the state's disaster information system through workshops, ICT tool provision, and the establishment of a **Project Management Unit (PMU)** at the Relief Commissioner's Office to ensure effective coordination.
- **Budget and Implementation:**
  - The Uttar Pradesh government has approved a **budget of Rs 19.99 crore** for the next three years to execute the program in phases.
  - The implementation will be guided by technical proposals from UNDP, with the program aligned with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) recommendations.

About United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

- **About:**
  - The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the **UN's global development network,** advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience, and resources to help people build a better life.
- **Formation and Headquarters:**
  - The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) was officially **established in 1965** by the UN General Assembly.
  - UNDP was formed by merging the United Nations Expanded Programme of Technical Assistance (1949) and the United Nations Special Fund (1958).
  - It has its **headquarters in New York City,** but works primarily through its offices in about 170 countries and territories.
- **Global Presence and Approach:**
  - It works on the ground in some 170 countries and territories, supporting their own **solutions to development challenges** and developing national and local capacities that will help them achieve human development and the Sustainable Development Goals.
- **Focus Areas:**
  - Its work is concentrated on **three main focus areas:**
    - Sustainable development
    - Democratic governance and peacebuilding
    - Climate and disaster resilience

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NAMASTE Day

Why in News?

On the occasion of the '**National Action for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) Day', (16th July),** Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, inaugurated the helpline (14473) for waste pickers and distributed PPE kits and **Ayushman cards** to Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs) and Waste Pickers, in Lucknow.

Key Points

About NAMASTE Scheme

- **About:** The NAMASTE scheme is a **human-centric initiative** by the government to ensure that no Safai Karamchari has to engage in **hazardous manual work** such as cleaning sewers and septic tanks.
  - The scheme aims to improve the working conditions of **Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs)** and promote their well-being through various support measures.
- **Implementation and Duration:** Launched jointly by the Union Ministries of Social Justice and Empowerment and **Housing and Urban Affairs,** the scheme is being implemented by the **National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC).**
  - The scheme, with a budget of Rs 349.73 crore, will run from FY 2023-24 to 2025-26, covering all 4800+ ULBs and replacing the previous **Self-Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SRMS).**
- **Key Entitlements for Sewer and Septic Tank Workers (SSWs):** The scheme offers various entitlements for SSWs to ensure their safety, well-being, and sustainable livelihood:
  - SSWs are being profiled through a digital application.
  - Provision of **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)** kits to ensure safety during work.
  - Ensuring access to necessary **safety tools** and resources.
  - Providing training to enhance workers' safety and skills.
  - Ensuring comprehensive **health insurance** for SSWs.
  - The scheme aims to **create livelihood opportunities** for SSWs through:
    - Providing access to vehicles and machines related to sanitation at subsidized rates.
    - Encouraging SSWs to start their own sanitation businesses, supported by capacity-building initiatives.

About Manual Scavenging

- **Manual scavenging** is defined as "the **removal of human excrement** from public streets and dry latrines, cleaning septic tanks, gutters and sewers".
- A manual scavenger is anyone employed to manually clean, carry, or handle human excreta from insanitary latrines, open drains, pits, or railway tracks, before it fully decomposes, as per the **Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act (PEMSR), 2013.**
  - India **prohibited the practice** under the PEMSR Act, 2013, which acknowledges manual scavenging as a **"dehumanizing practice"** and aims to address the historical injustices endured by manual scavengers.
- **Government Initiatives and Schemes:**
  - Safaimitra Suraksha Challenge
  - Swachhta Abhiyan App
  - Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan
  - National Commission for Safai Karamchari
  - Swachhta Udyami Yojana (SUY)
  - Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)
  - **Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0**

Uttar Pradesh Revives 50 Rivers

The **Uttar Pradesh government** has successfully **rejuvenated 50 rivers** spanning 3,363 km through a **collaborative effort** involving **state initiatives** and **local participation**.

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Key Points

- **About the Project:** The initiative was implemented across **1,011 gram panchayats** in **rural areas**.
  - The efforts were driven by the **Namami Gange programme** and sustained through the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA)**.
- **Impact:**
  - **Environmental and Agricultural:** The restoration of rivers and construction of 3,388 ponds in rural areas enhanced groundwater levels and water storage capacity,
    - It will reduce water scarcity and support agriculture and livestock needs for local farmers.
  - **Sustainability and Soil Conservation:** The government planted along riverbank sites to prevent erosion and reinforce embankments, and identified new projects for river restoration and watershed development.
  - **Socio-Cultural and Employment Benefits:** River revival efforts have restored cultural sites, boosted water conservation awareness, encouraged community participation, and generated rural jobs through MNREGA, aiding local development.

Namami Gange Programme

- **Launched**: It was **launched in 2014–15** as a **flagship integrated conservation mission** by the Government of India.
- **Objective**: Twin goals of **pollution abatement** and **rejuvenation** of River Ganga and its tributaries. Focus on restoring **"Nirmal Dhara" (unpolluted flow)** and **"Aviral Dhara" (continuous flow)**.
- **Coverage**: The Ganga Basin spans **11 states**, covering **27% of India's land area** and supporting **47% of the population**.
- **Key Components**:
  - **Nirmal Ganga**: Pollution control via sewage treatment and waste management.
  - **Aviral Ganga**: Ecological flow restoration and afforestation.
  - **Jan Ganga**: Community awareness and engagement.
  - **Gyan Ganga**: Research, policy support, and river basin planning.
- **Recent Initiatives**:
  - **New STPs** and drain interception in **Varanasi** and **Bhadohi** (over ₹400 crore investment).
  - Development of **biodiversity parks** in 7 districts and **priority wetlands** in 3 states including UP.
  - Launch of a **national framework** for safe reuse of treated water.

Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA)

- It was **passed in 2005** and is a rights-based employment guarantee scheme aimed at rural livelihood security.
- **Core Objective**: To provide **100 days of guaranteed wage employment** in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members are willing to do unskilled manual work.
- **Key Features:**
  - **Eligibility**: Indian citizen, 18 years or older, part of a rural household, and willing to engage in unskilled manual work.
  - **Decentralized Planning**: Planning and implementation are entrusted to Gram Sabhas and Panchayati Raj Institutions, ensuring grassroots participation.
  - **Unemployment Allowance**: If work is not provided within 15 days of application, a compensation (¼ wage for first 30 days, ½ thereafter) must be paid.
  - **Worksite Norms**: Employment must be within a 5 km radius; basic facilities such as drinking water, shade, and first aid must be ensured.
  - **Time-bound Payments**: Wages must be paid weekly and **within 15 days**, else compensation is applicable.

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Kaushal Mela 2025

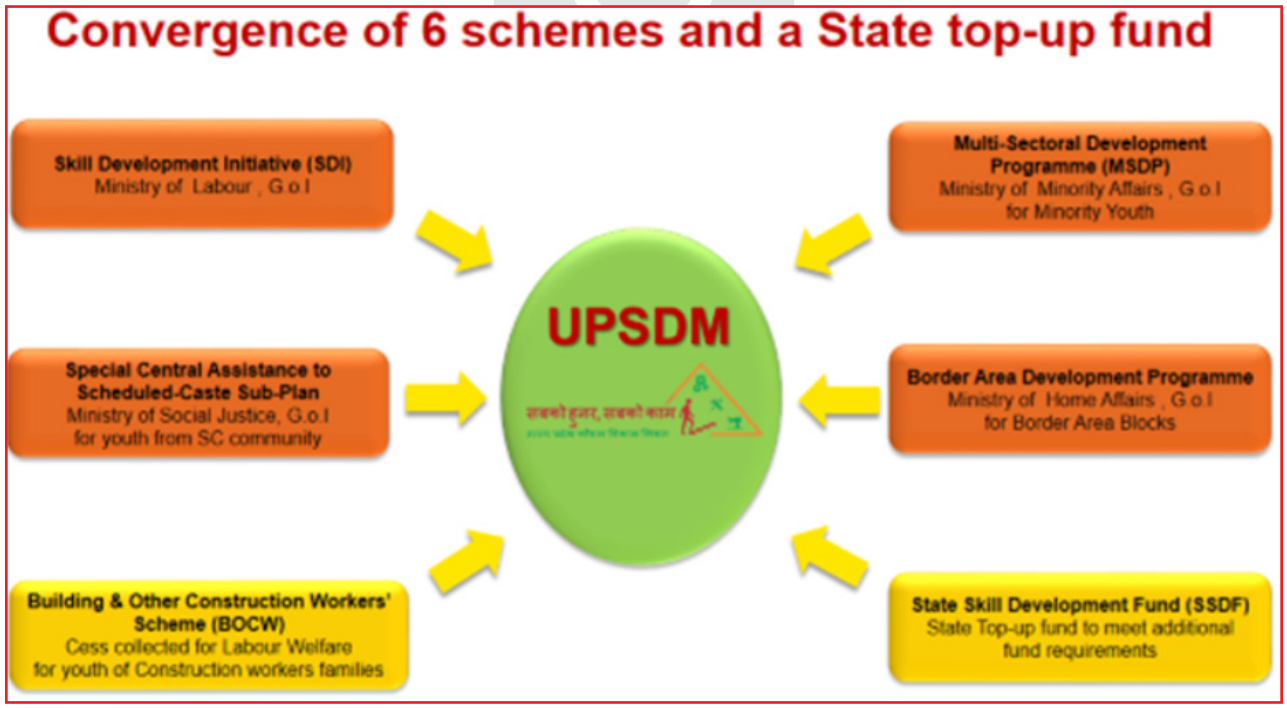
Why in News?

The city of Lucknow hosted the ***Kaushal Mela 2025*** on the occasion of ***World Youth Skills Day*** at **Indira Gandhi Pratishthan**.

- It focuses on promoting **vocational training, skill development, and self-reliance** among the youth of Uttar Pradesh.

Key Points

- **Uttar Pradesh Government's Skilling Initiative:**
  - **Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission (UPSDM):**
    - **Target Group:** The mission provides free, employment-oriented training for youths aged 14 to 35.
    - **Objective:** The state government aims to create employment opportunities based on skills.
    - **Annual Training:** Every year, 3 lakh youths are trained across more than 2,800 training centers.
    - **Total Training:** As of March 2025, 14,13,716 youths have been trained since the mission's inception in FY 2017-18.
    - **Employment Facilitation:** The mission has successfully facilitated employment for 5,66,483 youths.
    - **Partnerships:** The mission has partnered with 24 major industrial establishments as training providers and 8 placement agencies to boost job opportunities.
    - It is **India's first integrated model** that runs **five Central Government** and **one State Government** skill development schemes in a **standardized and coordinated** manner.



- **Skill Development Initiative (SDI):** A GoI-funded scheme by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, offering MES courses to youth aged 14–35 from all categories with a focus on 30% women and 75% placement.

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- **Special Central Assistance to Scheduled-Caste Sub-Plan:** A **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** scheme targeting SC youth (14–35 years), offering MES and QP-NOS courses with 30% women participation, fully funded by GoI.
- **Multi-Sectoral Development Programme (MSDP):** Run by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, this GoI-funded scheme provides MES training to minority youth in selected districts of UP, ensuring 33% women participation and 75% placement.
- **Border Area Development Programme (BADP):** A Home Ministry scheme for youth in border areas (19 blocks) of UP, offering MES and QP-NOS training with 50% women participation, fully funded by GoI.
- **Building & Other Construction Workers' Scheme (BOCW):** A GoUP-funded scheme offering MES and QP-NOS training to registered construction workers and their families aged 14–50 years.
- **State Skill Development Fund (SSDF):** A UP state top-up fund providing MES and QP-NOS training to youth aged 14–35, targeting 20% minorities and 30% women, with a 60% placement goal.
  - A **State Skill Development Fund (SSDF)** has been instituted to provide **top-up funding** and ensure effective scheme integration.
- According to **common minimum norms**, **70% placement** of certified candidates is mandatory, with **wage employment forming at least 50%**.'

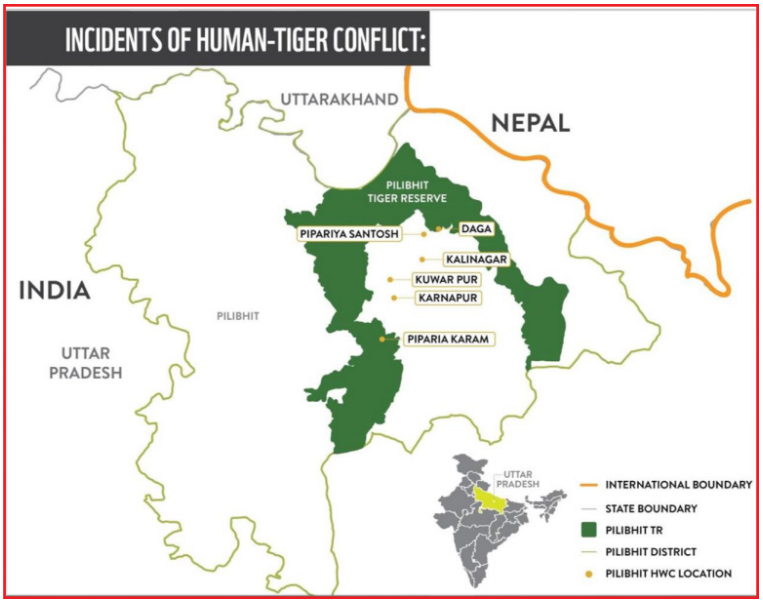
ITI Chalo Abhiyan

- It was **launched on 12th May 2025**, to increase admissions in ITIs across Uttar Pradesh.
- It aims to strengthen **technical education** and enhance employability among youth, aligned with ***Make in India*** and ***Digital India***.
- Implemented through coordinated efforts of District Magistrates, school authorities, and village heads.
- **149 Government ITIs** have partnered with **Tata Technologies** to offer **11 industry-aligned long-term courses**.
- The mission raises awareness in schools and rural areas, bridging the education-employment gap to make UP a skill development hub.

Pilibhit Tiger Reserve (PTR)

Why in News?

A suspected **tiger attack** near **Pilibhit Tiger Reserve** on Thursday killed a person, marking the second such incident in three days, leading officials to consider seeking permission to shoot the tiger.



Key Points

About Pilibhit Tiger Reserve

- It is located in the Pilibhit and Shahjahanpur districts of Uttar Pradesh. It was notified as a **Tiger Reserve in the year 2014.**
  - In the year 2020, it won **the international award TX2** for doubling the number of tigers in the last four years.

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- It is part of the **Terai Arc landscape in the Upper Gangetic Plain.**
- The Gomti River originates from this reserve, which is also the catchment area of several other rivers like **Sharda, Chuka, and Mala Khannot.**
- **Flora and Fauna:** It is home to a **habitat for over 128 animals**, 326 bird species, and 2,100 flowering plants.
  - Wild animals include tigers, **swamp deer, Bengal florican**, **leopard**, etc.
  - It consists of dense **sal forests**, plantations, and **grasslands** with several water bodies.

About Human-Animal Conflict

- **Definition:** Human-animal conflict refers to situations where human activities, such as agriculture, infrastructure development, or resource extraction, **come into conflict with wild animals**, leading to **negative outcomes** for both humans and animals.

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- **Government Measures to Tackle Human-Animal Conflict:**
  - **The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** The act provides the legal framework for the activities, Prohibition of hunting, the Protection and management of wildlife habitats, and the establishment of protected areas, etc.
  - **The Biological Diversity Act, 2002:** India is a part of the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity. It ensures that the Biological Diversity Act complements rather than contradicts existing laws concerning forests and wildlife.
  - **National Wildlife Action Plan (2002-2016):** It focuses on strengthening and enhancing the protected area network, on the conservation of Endangered wildlife and their habitats, on controlling trade in wildlife products, and on research, education, and training.
  - **Project Tiger:** Project Tiger is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, launched in 1973.
  - **Project Elephant:** It is a centrally sponsored scheme and was launched in February 1992 for the protection of elephants, their habitats, and corridors.

Pradhan Mantri Dhan Dhanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY)

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has submitted a **detailed proposal to the Centre** to secure a significant share in the newly launched **Pradhan Mantri Dhan Dhanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY)** for boosting agricultural productivity.

Key Points

About Pradhan Mantri Dhan Dhanya Krishi Yojana (PMDDKY)

- **About:** PMDDKY is a **comprehensive farm programme** designed to enhance productivity, promote sustainable practices, and improve livelihoods.
  - It was originally announced in the Union Budget 2025–26 and has an annual outlay of **Rs 24,000 crore for six years,** starting from 2025–26.
  - It targets **100 underperforming districts** to **boost farm productivity** through better irrigation, storage, and credit access while promoting sustainable practices.
  - It merges **36 schemes** from **11 Union Ministries** to create a unified agricultural support system.
  - It is inspired by NITI Aayog's Aspirational Districts Programme.
- **District Selection Criteria:**
  - **Low Agricultural Productivity**: Districts with low agricultural output per hectare.
  - **Low Cropping Intensity**: Regions with limited crop variety or insufficient crop cycles per year.
  - **Limited Credit Disbursement**: Areas with restricted access to financial resources for farmers.
  - **State Representation**: Selection will consider the **share of Net Cropped Area and operational holdings** in each state/union territory. A minimum of **one district will be selected from each state** to ensure balanced regional development.
- **Implementation and Monitoring:**
  - **District Agriculture and Allied Activities Plans**: Each district will have a dedicated plan developed by the **District Dhan Dhaanya Samiti**, including progressive farmers as members. The plans will **align with national goals** like crop diversification, water conservation, and agricultural self-sufficiency.
  - **Monitoring and Evaluation**: Progress will be tracked using **117 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** via a dedicated dashboard, with monthly reviews.
    - **Central Nodal Officers** will be appointed for each district for smooth implementation. NITI Aayog will provide regular guidance and review district plans.

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- **Committees at Various Levels**: Committees at the district, state, and national levels will oversee the planning, implementation, and monitoring of progress to ensure the scheme's effectiveness.

- **Expected Outcomes:**
  - **Farmer Beneficiaries**: Approximately **1.7 crore farmers** across India are expected to benefit directly.
  - **Integration of Allied Sectors**: The scheme integrates sectors like **livestock**, **dairy**, **and fisheries** to enhance value and create local livelihoods.
  - **Focus Areas**: It emphasizes **post-harvest storage, improved irrigation,** easier credit access, and the promotion of natural and organic farming, ultimately enhancing rural economic resilience.

About State Government's Preparation

- The Uttar Pradesh (UP) government has initiated planning to **secure a significant share** of the scheme's benefits.
- UP's agriculture department has **reviewed field details** and submitted an **exhaustive proposal** to the Centre for the successful implementation of the scheme.
- **UP, being a key agricultural state**, is expected to receive a prominent share of the scheme's allocation.

About Other Complementary Schemes

- **UP AGREES scheme:** PMDDKY complements the **World Bank-aided UP AGREES scheme**, aiming to improve agricultural yields in **28 districts of the Purvanchal and Bundelkhand regions.**
  - Its main objective is to **increase agricultural productivity**, ensure conservation of natural resources and increase the income of farmers.
  - The project will **link 10,000 women producer groups** and send 500 farmers abroad for advanced training.
- **Aspirational District Programme:** The **Aspirational District Programme** is also working to enhance agricultural productivity in the state.
  - **Launch**: Initiated in 2018 by the Government of India to uplift 112 of the most underdeveloped districts.
  - **Core Philosophy**: Shift from **"backwardness" to "aspiration"** by empowering districts to unlock their latent potential.
  - **Focus Areas**: Health, nutrition, education, infrastructure, and economic opportunities.

Performance Of Uttar Pradesh in Swachhta Survekshan 2024-25

Why in News?

Lucknow was ranked the **third cleanest city** in the country, following Ahmedabad and Bhopal, in the **million-plus population category** under the **Swachhta Survekshan 2024-25**, with the winners being honored by President Droupadi Murmu in New Delhi.

Key Points

- **Top Performer:**
  - **Lucknow:**
    - **Ranking:** 3rd cleanest city in the country **(Million-plus population category).**
    - **Milestone:** Achieved a **7-star garbage GFC rating,** becoming the first city in Uttar Pradesh to do so.
  - **Prayagraj:** Earned special recognition as the **Cleanest Ganga Town,** securing first place in the country after defeating Varanasi.
  - Noida:
    - **Ranking:** Topped the **Super Swachh League** chart in the 3 lakh-10 lakh population category.
- A **new category** introduced to rank top-tier performers separately.
- **Other Notable Achievements:**
  - Seven UP Cities in Top 20 (Million-plus category)
    - **Cities:** Lucknow, Agra, Gorakhpur, Kanpur, Ghaziabad, Prayagraj, Noida

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- **Awards for Maha Kumbh 2025:** Special awards for cleanliness and sanitation practices during the Maha Kumbh, highlighting the state's successful sanitation efforts during large-scale events.

- **Cities with Top Ratings:**
  - **5-Star Rating:** Agra, Gorakhpur, Kanpur, Ghaziabad, Prayagraj, Noida
  - **3rd Place in Safaimitra Surakshit Shaher Category:** Gorakhpur
  - **Top 10 Cleanest Cities (3-10 lakh population):** Gorakhpur (3rd), Moradabad (10th)
  - **Emerging Clean City:** Agra (Ranked 32nd nationally)
- **New Water-Plus Achievements:**
  - **16 cities** achieved Water-plus status for the first time, including Bijnor and Shamshabad
    - Water-plus status awarded to local bodies **excelling in sanitation, water management,** and recycling practices.
  - Among 17 municipal corporations, **13 received Water-plus status,** a significant increase from the previous year (only 2 cities had Water-plus status)
- **Improvements in Waste Management:**
  - **Increase in Verified Door-to-Door Garbage Collection:** Up from 48% to 62% in one year
  - **Increase in Garbage Processing:** Up from 48% to 85% in one year
- **Statewide Improvements:**
  - **Urban Local Bodies (ULBs):** 83 urban local bodies improved their rankings compared to the previous year
  - **ODF++ ULBs:** 337 ULBs declared as ODF++ (Open Defecation Free++), a **significant increase** from the previous year (129 ULBs).

Swachh Survekshan

- **About: Swachh Survekshan,** conducted by the **MoHUA** since **2016**, is the world's largest urban sanitation and cleanliness survey under the Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban (SBM-U).
  - **Swachh Survekshan Awards** are annual rankings and recognitions given to cities and urban local bodies (ULBs) under the **Swachh Survekshan.**
  - It aims to foster **citizen participation**, generate **awareness on sanitation**, and promote **competitive federalism** through performance benchmarking.
- **Swachh Survekshan 2025:** Under the revamped framework of **Swachh Survekshan 2025(9th edition**), indicators have been **simplified and restructured into 10 comprehensive sections**.
  - The **annual theme for 2025** is **"Reduce, Reuse, Recycle (3R)",** promoting **circular economy principles** in line with the **Jaipur Declaration** adopted at the **12th Regional 3R and Circular Economy Forum (March 2025)**.

Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) Index

Why in News?

The latest **Women Economic Empowerment (WEE) Index**, developed by the **Department of Planning**, highlights the significant progress made in enhancing **women's economic participation in Uttar Pradesh.**

Key Points

About the WEE Index

- **About:** It is a pivotal report from the **Planning Department** and **Udayati Foundation**, aimed at evaluating the **impact of government schemes** on women and fostering **gender-inclusive, data-driven policymaking** in the state.
- **WEE Index Structure:** The index evaluates all **75 districts** based on five key parameters:
  - Entrepreneurship
  - Employment
  - Education & Skill Development
  - Livelihood
  - Safety & Transportation infrastructure
  - **49 indicators** from **15 departments** are analyzed to gauge performance across these categories.

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- **District Classification:** The districts were categorized based on their performance in the WEE Index:
  - **'Champions':** These districts demonstrated strong outcomes due to **effective government schemes**, **active women's participation**, and **structural support**. Women in these districts are excelling in entrepreneurship, education, and employment. The list includes:
    - Lucknow, Kanpur Nagar, Varanasi, Jhansi, Sultanpur, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Prayagraj, Ayodhya, Sonbhadra, Rae Bareli, Gorakhpur, Deoria, Ambedkar Nagar, Agra, Ghaziabad.
  - **'Leader':** These districts performed well but need to maintain momentum. The list includes:
    - Pratapgarh, Moradabad, Barabanki, Aligarh, Bareilly.
  - **'Contender':** These districts have shown progress, but more efforts are required, particularly in **skill training** and **employment opportunities**. The list includes:
    - Ghazipur, Jalaun, Muzaffarnagar, Bulandshahr.
  - **'Aspirational':** These districts face challenges in **grassroots awareness**, **education**, **safety**, and **self-employment**. Special campaigns will be launched to address these issues. The list includes:
    - Chandauli, Baghpat, Amroha, Badaun, Sitapur, Siddharthnagar, Balrampur, Mahoba, Sambhal, Shravasti.
- **Key Insights of the Index:**
  - **Education & Skill Development:** There has been a notable increase in women's involvement in education and skill development programs.
    - Government initiatives such as **vocational training**, **Mission Shakti, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana**, and **Swachh Bharat Mission** have empowered women socially and economically by enhancing safety, social awareness, and mobility.
  - **Public Transport Inclusion:** Schemes to recruit women as **drivers and conductors in public transport** have boosted women's economic independence and mobility.
- **Actionable Measures:**
  - **Integration of WEE Index:** The WEE index will be integrated into the Chief Minister's Control Room for **real-time monitoring**, serving as a **foundational tool for policymaking** and tracking outcomes across all departments.
    - Departments are required to **develop actionable plans** focused on **women's empowerment** and create district-level strategies to localize the impact of state schemes.
  - **Targeted Campaigns:** Specific districts such as Banda, Jalaun, Jaunpur, Mahoba, Shravasti, and Sitapur will launch campaigns under the **ODOP Margin Money Scheme** to increase women's inclusion.
  - **Recruitment Drives:** Recruitment drives for home guards and teachers will prioritize women, drawing from the successful model used in police recruitment.
  - **Expanding Women's Workforce Participation:** Efforts will be made to boost **women's enrollment in technical institutes,** vocational programs, and skill training centers.
    - The creation of **'Re-enrolment Units'** will aim to bring back women who have dropped out of courses.
  - **Support for Healthcare Careers:** Paramedical institutes will be developed to facilitate women's careers in **healthcare** and service sectors.
  - **Public Transport Roles:** There will be an emphasis on increasing women's roles in public transport, specifically as drivers and conductors, by providing **specialized training** and support facilities.

Birth Anniversary Of Mangal Pandey

Why in News?

The **Prime Minister** paid tribute to the great freedom fighter **Mangal Pandey** on his **198th birth anniversary on 19th July 2025.**

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Key Points

About Mangal Pandey

- **Early Life and Background:**
  - **Born** on **July 19, 1827**, in **Nagwa village** of Ballia district (present-day Uttar Pradesh), Mangal Pandey hailed from a **Bhumihar Brahmin** family.
  - He **joined the East India Company's army** at age 22, serving in the **6th Company of the 34th Bengal Native Infantry**.
- **Role in Revolt of 1857:**
  - He refused to use the newly introduced **Enfield Pattern 1853 rifle-musket**, as it was **believed** that its **cartridges were greased with beef and pork fat**. It offended both **Hindu and Muslim sepoys**, who had to **bite them open** to load the weapon.
  - On **29 March 1857**, he fired the first shot of rebellion at the Sergeant Major of his regiment in **Barrackpore**, near Kolkata.
  - This act of defiance triggered the historic **Revolt of 1857**, often referred to as the **Sepoy Mutiny** or the **First War of Independence**.
  - The uprising ultimately led to the **end of the East India Company's rule** in India, with the British Crown taking direct control through **Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858** and the enactment of the **Government of India Act, 1858**, which appointed a **Viceroy in place of the Governor-General.**
    - **Lord Canning** became the first Viceroy under this new system.
  - He was subsequently overpowered and **hanged on 8 April 1857**, by order of a **Court Martial at Lal Bagan, Barrackpore**.
    - After Pandey's execution, the **7th Awadh Regiment** revolted and faced suppression. His **regiment was disbanded**, similar to the 19th Infantry at **Behrampore**, for displaying dissent.
    - The rebellion **spread across army cantonments**—in **Ambala, Lucknow, and Meerut**.
    - On **10 May 1857**, sepoys in **Meerut** launched the uprising that escalated into a nationwide revolt.
    - They marched to **Delhi**, urging the aged **Bahadur Shah II** to become their **symbolic emperor**. After persuasion, he accepted and was declared **Shah-en-shah-i-Hindustan**.
- He was the last Mughal emperor, **exiled to Rangoon** after the failure of the revolt.
- The **Red Fort** was seized on **19 September 1857**, and he **remained in captivity until he died in 1862**.
- **Significance:** Mangal Pandey's defiance in Barrackpore was not an isolated incident but a culmination of **widespread resentment**, **religious grievances**, and **economic exploitation** under British rule. His legacy as the **trigger** of the **First War of Indian Independence** continues to be remembered as a symbol of **national resistance** and **patriotic sacrifice**.

About Socio-Political Context of Awadh

- Mangal Pandey belonged to **Awadh**, a key region for Company recruitment. **75,000 sepoys** from Awadh were part of the British army, and **almost every agricultural family** had a representative serving.
- The **annexation of Awadh** in 1856 by **Lord Dalhousie** on the grounds of **misgovernance** (not under the **Doctrine of Lapse**) and the **land revenue settlements** caused deep resentment.

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- **The Doctrine of Lapse was** introduced by **Lord Dalhousie** (Governor-General, 1848–56). It denied **adopted heirs the right to inherit kingdoms**, leading to the **annexation** of states like **Satara (1848), Punjab (1849), Jhansi, and Nagpur (1854)**.

- **Confiscation of taluqdars' lands** and harsh revenue systems led to **14,000 petitions** from sepoys protesting their economic hardships. Pandey's rebellion thus became symbolic of this **cumulative peasant-military discontent**.

About Other Prominent Leaders of the 1857 Revolt

- **Nana Sahib (Kanpur):** Adopted son of **Peshwa Baji Rao II**; denied pension rights by the British. Took leadership in Kanpur; fled to **Nepal in 1859**, where he likely died.
- **Begum Hazrat Mahal (Lucknow):** Widow of **Nawab Wajid Ali Shah**; led the revolt from Lucknow. Crowned her son **Birjis Qadr** as king. Lived in **exile in Nepal** until her death in 1879.
- **Veer Kuwar Singh (Bihar): 80-year-old zamindar** from Bhojpur; led guerrilla warfare. Retook **Jagdishpur** in 1858 before succumbing to injuries.
- **Rani Laxmibai (Jhansi):** Denied succession under the **Doctrine of Lapse**. Fought British forces under **General Hugh Rose** in 1858.
- **Khan Bahadur Khan (Bareilly):** Led a prolonged resistance in Bareilly at age **82**; fought **Sir Colin Campbell**.
- **Maulvi Liaqat Ali (Allahabad):** Controlled Allahabad briefly; operated from **Khusro Bagh**. Arrested in **1872** and deported to **Andaman Islands**.

UP Government Launches HRMS Portal for Udyami Mitras

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh Government has launched the **Human Resource Management System (HRMS)** portal for **'Udyami Mitras'** to enhance investor facilitation and internal efficiency.

- This **cloud-based platform**, integrated with the state's **Nivesh Sarathi platform**, aims to digitize and streamline essential administrative functions.

Key Points

About Key Features of the HRMS Portal

- **Automation of HR Functions:** The HRMS portal is **designed to automate key human resource operations** like attendance, leave management, payroll processing, and Form-16 generation.
- **Real-time Access to Records:** The portal **provides real-time access** to employee records, promoting **transparency** and reinforcing administrative oversight at **both district and state levels.**
- **Digitization of Workflows:** The transition from manual to system-based workflows **enhances the speed and accuracy of HR processes,** ensuring smoother operations across the board.
- **Integration with Nivesh Sarathi:** By integrating with Nivesh Sarathi, the portal **ensures seamless coordination** between Udyami Mitras and other government platforms, enhancing communication and operational efficiency.

About the Role of Udyami Mitras

- Under the **Mukhyamantri Udyami Mitra Yojana** (launched in 2023), more than 110 trained Udyami Mitras have been deployed across districts and industrial authorities.
  - These Mitras play a pivotal role as **facilitators** between investors and the government.
- **Their responsibilities include:**
  - **Land Identification:** Assisting investors in identifying suitable land for their projects.
  - **MoU Tracking:** Ensuring the smooth execution and monitoring of Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs).
  - **Investment Proposal Verification:** Verifying and validating investment proposals to ensure alignment with government policies.
  - **Industrial Interactions:** Facilitating smooth interactions between industrialists and government authorities.
  - **Resolving Bottlenecks:** Addressing and resolving obstacles faced by investors through platforms like **Nivesh Mitra**, **Nivesh Sarathi**, and **OIMS** (Online Industrial Management System).

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Other Investor-Friendly Initiatives of Uttar Pradesh Government

- **Nivesh Sarathi:** Nivesh Sarathi in Uttar Pradesh is a comprehensive online platform launched by the UP government in November 2022 to facilitate and streamline the investment process in the state.
  - It acts as a **single-window clearance system** for investors, significantly simplifying interactions with over 50 government departments by integrating their services on one digital portal.
- **Invest UP:** The state's dedicated nodal agency supporting prospective and existing investors through policy advocacy, project facilitation, and aftercare services. It organizes major events like the UP Global Investors Summit to mobilize investment proposals and foster industry engagement.
- **Extensive Land Bank Development:** UP has created a 30,000-acre land bank, especially along expressways, with 4,000 acres already allocated for industrial development.
- **Special Sectoral Policies:**
  - UP Industrial Investment & Employment Promotion Policy 2022
  - **GCC Policy 2024 (Global Capability Center):** Incentives for global firms to establish centers in both metro and non-metro cities, including land subsidies up to 50%, capital subsidies, and salary support for local talent.
  - **SAF Manufacturing Promotion Policy 2025:** First-of-its-kind in India, offers incentives, streamlined support, and a focus on sustainable aviation fuel industries, benefiting both investors and local farmers.
  - **Electronics Manufacturing Cluster (EMC 2.0):** A ₹417 crore project in Gautam Buddha Nagar expected to draw ₹2,500 crore in investments and generate 15,000 jobs by 2028, boosting the electronics ecosystem in line with Make in India.

FIDE World Cup 2025 to Be Hosted in India

Why in news?

India will host the **Chess World Cup 2025** from 30 October 2025 to 27 November 2025, with the host city announcement to be made later by the **International Chess Federation (FIDE).**

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Key Points

About the Tournament

- **Tournament Format:**
  - The FIDE World Cup 2025 will follow a **knockout format**, with 206 players competing.
  - The tournament has a **dynamic elimination system** where the losing player is eliminated after each round.
  - Each round spans three days: **two classical games** on the first two days, followed by tie-breaks on the third day if necessary.
  - The **top 50 players** will receive byes in the first round, while the rest will compete based on a principle where the top half faces the reversed lower half.
- **Qualification Pathways:**
  - **Direct qualification**: The **top three finishers of the 2025 World Cup** will earn direct entry to the 2026 Candidates Tournament.
  - **Players eligible**: Reigning World Champion, top four finishers from the 2023 World Cup, Women's World Champion, 2024 World Junior Champion (U-20), and other continental qualifiers.
  - **Continental spots**: 80 spots will be granted to players through **Continental events,** with each continent receiving a different allocation (Africa: 3, Asia: 35, Europe: 30, Americas: 3).
  - **Top-rated players**: The highest-rated players from the **June 2025 FIDE rating list will also receive invitations,** along with players from the top 100 national federations from the 2024 Chess Olympiad.

About India's Contribution to Chess

- **India's Major Achievements:**
  - India's has produced some of the world's most celebrated chess players, most notably **Viswanathan Anand,** a five-time World Champion and **current FIDE Deputy President,** who has helped elevate India's status as a global chess hub.

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- The emergence of young talents like **Gukesh Dommaraju**, **Praggnanandhaa R**, and **Arjun Erigaisi**, have transformed the nation's chess landscape.
- In 2024, India made history by winning its first-ever gold medals in both the Open and Women's Chess Olympiad teams.
- The **2024 FIDE World Chess Championship** was won by Gukesh Dommaraju, who became the **youngest Chess World Champion** in history at age 18.
  - He defeated the reigning champion **Ding Liren (China)** in a 14-game classical match held in Singapore.
  - The FIDE World Championship 2024 match was also the **first in 138 years** to feature two contestants from Asia.
- **Praggnanandhaa R** also finished as the runner-up in the 2023 World Cup.

Major Chess Events in India: India's success in hosting international chess events is well established. Notable recent events include:

- **FIDE Chess Olympiad 2022**: Held in Mamallapuram, this event was a major organizational success.
- **Tata Steel Chess India**: A key event in the global chess calendar.
- **FIDE World Junior U20 Championship 2024**: Hosted by India, showcasing the country's growing reputation as a destination for high-level chess.
- **FIDE Women's Grand Prix (2025)**: A part of the global chess series highlighting women's participation in the sport.

Youth Spiritual Summit Adopts Kashi Declaration

Why in News?

The **Youth Spiritual Summit** held at the Rudraksh International Convention Centre in **Varanasi** concluded with the formal adoption of the **Kashi Declaration**, marking a significant milestone in India's journey towards a **drug-free society** **by 2047**.

About Youth Spiritual Summit

Summit Overview:

- The summit, organized by the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports**, brought together over **600 youth leaders** and representatives from **120 spiritual and socio-cultural organizations.**
- The summit provided a platform for **in-depth discussions** on the psychological and societal impacts of drug abuse, the mechanics of **drug trafficking**, and strategies for grassroots awareness.
- **Four plenary sessions** were conducted, culminating in the Kashi Declaration. **Key themes** discussed during the sessions include:
  - The **psychological impacts** of addiction.
  - Understanding the **drug supply chains** and trafficking mechanisms.
  - **Effective grassroots campaigns** for drug awareness.
  - The **role of spiritual and cultural institutions** in rehabilitation.

The Kashi Declaration:

- **The Kashi Declaration** reflects the consensus to tackle drug abuse as a **public health crisis** and **societal challenge**.
- It calls for a **whole-of-government** and **whole-of-society** approach, integrating efforts from **spiritual, educational**, and **technological** sectors.
- The declaration proposes the establishment of a **Joint National Committee** for **multi-ministerial coordination**, ensuring accountability and progress tracking.
- The Declaration also calls for **annual progress reports** and a **national platform** to connect individuals struggling with addiction to support services.

Youth-Led Campaigns and MY Bharat Framework:

- **MY Bharat** will take the lead in mobilizing **youth-led efforts** to combat drug abuse across the nation.

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- Youth clubs and volunteers affiliated with **MY Bharat** will spearhead **awareness drives**, **pledge campaigns**, and **community outreach** efforts, ensuring the sustainability of this movement.
- The **Kashi Declaration** will serve as the **guiding document**, directing the efforts of youth groups and policymakers, and will be reviewed during the **Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue 2026** for progress and accountability.

Note:

- **My Bharat Portal,** officially known as Mera Yuva Bharat (MY Bharat), is a comprehensive youth-centric platform established by the Government of India, launched on **National Unity Day,** 31 October 2023, by Prime Minister.
- It is operated by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports as an autonomous body, designed specifically for youth aged 15 to 29 (with some activities for those aged 10–19), aligning with the **National Youth Policy, 2014.**

UP Government to Implement Samarth Portal

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh government** is set to fully implement the **'Samarth' portal** across all universities and colleges in the state by the academic year 2025-26.

- This initiative is part of the government's mission to transform higher education into a more **transparent, efficient**, and **technology-driven** system.

Key Points

- **Features of the Samarth Portal:**
  - The **Samarth platform** is designed to **streamline administrative processes** in **higher education** institutions. These functions will be managed entirely through this **digital platform,** reducing administrative overhead and improving workflow efficiency.
  - According to the roadmap from the state's **Higher Education Department**, by the **end of 2025**, all private ERP systems in educational institutions will be phased out, with Samarth becoming the **exclusive system** in use.
  - The introduction of this new system is expected to ease the **faculty promotion** process, making it more transparent and trackable.
    - Under the **career advancement scheme**, teachers will find it easier to apply for promotions, and the entire **selection process** will be visible to all.
- **Current Status:**
  - All **government universities** and affiliated colleges in Uttar Pradesh have already registered on the Samarth portal.
  - Many institutions have started utilizing the system for functions like **salary processing**, **expense management**, **leave tracking**, **admissions**, and **examinations**.
  - **Online student registrations** are already in progress, simplifying the admission process.
- **Centralised Admission System:**
  - To further enhance transparency, the state government has introduced a **centralised admission system** effective **July 2025**.
  - All student admissions will now be conducted through a **single unified portal**, ensuring greater uniformity and transparency.
    - The **trial phase of this centralised system** has already been successfully completed.
- **Future Developments:**
  - In addition to the Samarth portal, the UP government is working on a **separate online portal** dedicated to managing seminars, research projects, academic awards, and research grants.
    - This will provide a more transparent and simplified process for academicians and researchers.

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UP Ranks 1st in Amrit Sarovar Construction

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh has emerged as the **state with the highest number of Amrit Sarovars** in the country, having constructed and **rejuvenated 16,630 ponds**, three times the original target of 5,550 since the launch of the programme in 2022.

Key Points

- **Mission Amrit Sarovar:** It was launched on 24 April 2022 as part of **India's "Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav"** celebrations for the **75th year of independence.**
  - The mission aims to construct/rejuvenate **at least 75 Amrit Sarovars** in each district across India to overcome the water crisis in rural areas.
  - The target for these water bodies serves as a crucial step towards ensuring **water sustainability** at the local level.
  - **Eight Central Ministries/Departments,** including Dept. of Rural Development, Department of Land Resources, Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation, Department of Water Resources, Ministry of Panchayati Raj, Ministry of Forest, Environment and Climate Change, Ministry of Railway, Ministry of Road, Transport & Highways, actively contribute to the mission's execution.
  - Bhaskaracharya National Institute for Space Application and Geo-informatics **(BISAG-N)** has been engaged as **Technical partner** for the Mission.
    - BISAG-N is an **autonomous scientific society** registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860. It comes under the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.
  - **Geospatial data and technology** play a pivotal role in identifying and executing the construction and rejuvenation of Amrit Sarovar.

- **State-wise Ranking — Amrit Sarovar Construction (2022–2025):**

Rank	State	Number of Ponds
1	Uttar Pradesh	16,630
2	Madhya Pradesh	5,839
3	Chhattisgarh	2,902
4	Bihar	2,613
5	Haryana	2,088
6	Jharkhand	2,048
7	Punjab	1,450

Other Initiatives for Water Conservation in UP

- **Groundwater Week Celebrations:** The UP government recently observed **Groundwater Week** (16 July- 22 July), giving fresh momentum to ongoing water conservation projects and efforts to address the state's groundwater challenges.
- **Khet Talab Yojana**: Focused on the construction of farm ponds, providing up to **50% subsidy** to farmers for building ponds. Since its initiation in **2017-18**, the government has helped construct **37,403 farm ponds** under this scheme.
- **One District-One River Scheme**: Aims to **revive extinct rivers** by assigning a river revival project to each district.
- **Promotion of Water-Saving Irrigation Techniques**: This includes encouraging the use of **sprinkler** and **drip irrigation** systems to reduce water consumption.
- **Incorporation of Groundwater Harvesting**: Encouraging the integration of **groundwater harvesting structures** in building construction.
- **Development of Multipurpose Ponds**: These ponds are being developed along **riverbanks** for sustainable water management.
- **Groundwater Improvement in 29 Districts:** In areas where groundwater levels have remained low for the past decade, the government is focusing on the adoption of water-saving technologies, encouraging **at least one-fourth of farmers** in these areas to implement such practices.

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UP Cabinet Approves Key Development Projects

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh Cabinet** approved a range of transformative decisions aimed at **empowering women**, boosting education, developing infrastructure, and advancing defence initiatives.

Key Points

- **Stamp Duty Exemption for Women:** The Cabinet approved a **1% stamp duty exemption for women** purchasing property worth up to ₹1 crore, a significant increase from the previous limit of ₹10 lakh.
  - The new exemption will allow women to claim up to ₹1 lakh in rebates on property registration, promoting property ownership among middle-class women.
- **Tata Technology Centres in Polytechnics:** The partnership between the Uttar Pradesh government and Tata Technologies Limited (TTL) will result in the upgrading of 121 **government polytechnic institutes.**
  - TTL will invest ₹6,935.86 crore, with 87% of the cost borne by TTL and the remaining ₹1,063.96 crore funded by the state.
  - The initiative will enhance **technical skills** and **employability** by integrating industry-aligned curricula, with 45 institutes to be upgraded in the first phase.
- **Tablet Distribution for Youth Employment:** The previous plan to procure 25 lakh smartphones under the **Swami Vivekanand Yuva Sashaktikaran Yojana** was scrapped.
  - In place of smartphones, tablets with advanced features will be distributed to youth, with an allocated ₹2,000 crore budget for the 2025-26 financial year.
  - The tablets will aid in employment opportunities by supporting software like Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Google Sheets, thereby enhancing **digital literacy** and job readiness.
- **Chitrakoot Link Expressway Construction:** The Cabinet gave the go-ahead for the ₹939.67 crore **Chitrakoot Link Expressway project**, which will stretch over 15.172 km and connect Bharatkoop in Chitrakoot to Ahmadganj village.
  - The project, initially designed as a four-lane expressway (expandable to six lanes), will improve connectivity between the **Varanasi-Banda National Highway** and NH 135 BG, enhancing travel and trade routes in the region.
- **Incentives for Export-Oriented Investments:** The Cabinet approved incentives for two companies—Aquabridge, UAE-based, which will set up an **aquaculture project** in Unnao, and Innova Food Park from Karnataka, which will establish an **agri-export hub** near the Jewar International Airport.
  - These investments will not only **bolster exports** but also provide significant **support to local farmers**, enhancing agricultural development in the region.
- **Defence and Drone Manufacturing Expansion:** The Cabinet approved the sale of a land parcel to RAPHE mPhibr Pvt Ltd for ₹4.67 crore.
  - The firm, which already invested ₹800 crore in **defence and drone manufacturing**, will relocate the dairy unit and contribute an additional ₹10 crore to the local economy.
  - The Cabinet also approved a token lease for 10 hectares of land in the **UP Defence Corridor** to **Defence Research and Development Organisation's (DRDO) Instruments Research & Development Establishment (IRDE)**, which will create 150 direct and 500 indirect jobs.

Gram-Urja Model Of Uttar Pradesh

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has unveiled plans to establish **biogas plants** in several villages under the **Chief Minister's Gram-Urja Model.**

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Key Points

- **About:** This initiative aims to set up 2,250 biogas plants as part of a **pilot project** in the districts of **Ayodhya, Varanasi, Gorakhpur,** and **Gonda.**
- **Objectives:** The primary objective is to **localize the production of biogas**, which will be directly used by the villagers.
- **Expansion Plans & Cost Details:** If successful, this pilot project will be expanded to benefit **2.50 lakh rural households** over the next four years.
  - Each biogas unit is **estimated to cost Rs 39,300,** with farmers required to contribute only **Rs 3,990.** The remaining cost will be covered by government **subsidies and the carbon credit model.**
  - This cost-sharing model ensures that the initiative remains **financially viable** and accessible for rural farmers.
- **Approval and Government Support:** The project has already received formal approval from the state's Department of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change, ensuring that the initiative aligns with **environmental and climate goals.**
- **Supporting Infrastructure:** In addition to the biogas plants, the government plans to develop **cow shelters (Gaushalas)** in rural parts of UP.
  - These shelters will be constructed under the **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA),** providing employment opportunities to local villagers.
  - In the **first phase, 43 Gaushalas** will be equipped with biogas and **manure production units.** Each Gaushala is expected to produce **approximately 50 quintals of slurry per month,** which will be distributed to nearby farmers as **organic manure.**
- **Significance:** It has the **potential to cut LPG usage by up to 70%** in rural kitchens, significantly reducing environmental impact by lowering dependency on **non-renewable energy.**

Biogas

- Biogas is a renewable energy source that's produced when organic matter breaks down in the absence of oxygen. This process is called anaerobic digestion.
  - It's made up mostly of **methane (CH_4)** and **carbon dioxide (CO_2)**.

UP Governor Inaugurates Miyawaki Forest At ABVMU

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh Governor and Chancellor **Anandiben Patel** inaugurated a **Miyawaki forest** at **Atal Bihari Vajpayee Medical University (ABVMU)** in Lucknow and participated in a **sapling plantation drive**.

About Miyawaki Plantation Method

- It was **named after Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki. This** method involves **planting two to four different types of indigenous trees within every square metre**.
- The methodology was **developed in the 1970s**, with the basic objective **to densify green cover within a small parcel of land.**
- In this method, the **trees become self-sustaining,** and they **grow to their full length within three years.**
  - The **plants used in the Miyawaki method** are mostly self-sustaining and don't require regular maintenance like manuring and watering.
- The **dense green cover of indigenous trees** plays a key role in absorbing the dust particles of the area where the garden has been set up. The plants also help in regulating surface temperature.
  - Some of the common indigenous plants that are used for these forests include Anjan, Amala, Bel, Arjun, and Gunj.
  - These forests encourage new biodiversity and an ecosystem, which in turn increases the fertility of the soil.

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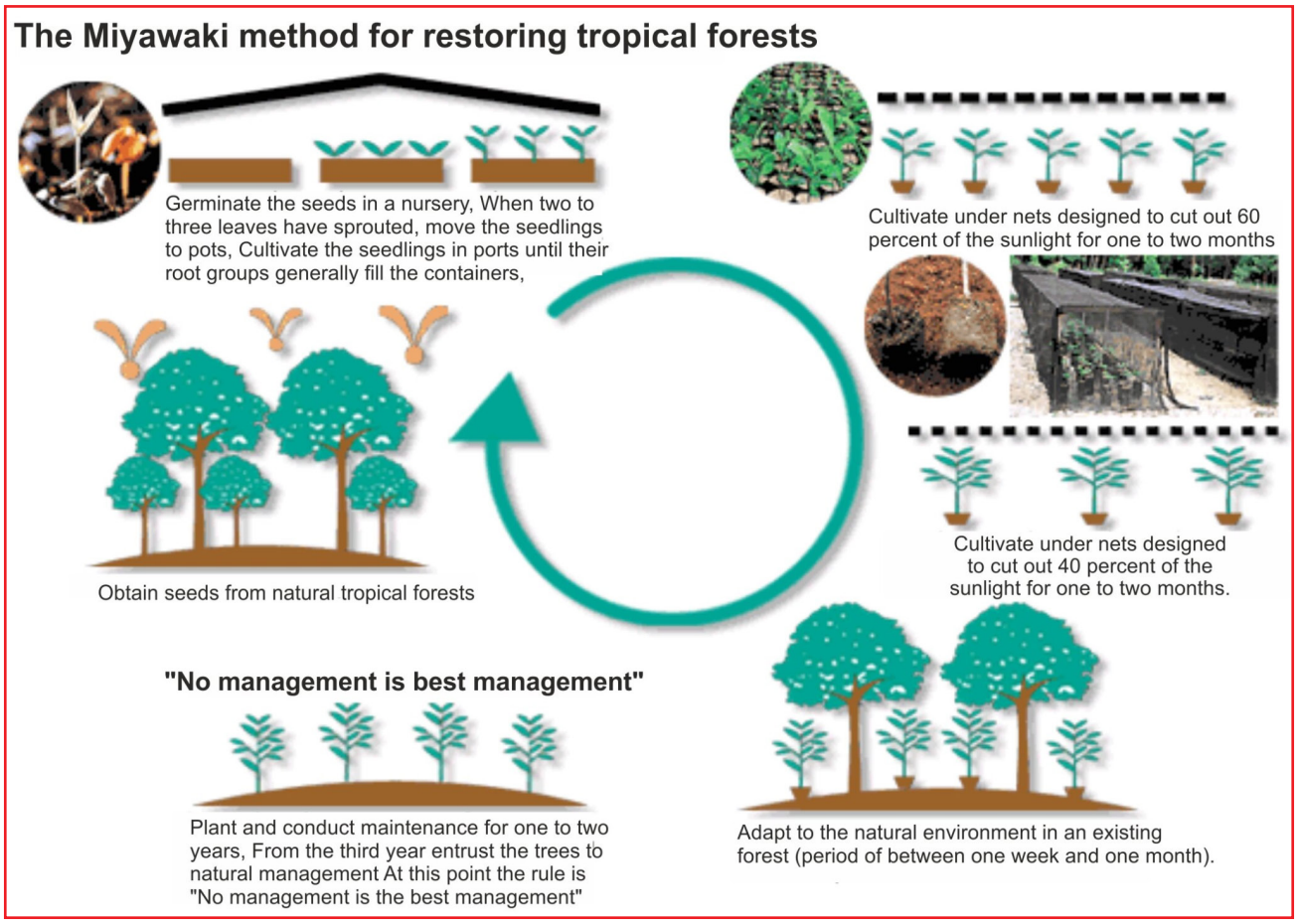

Funding for PMAY Urban 2.0 in Uttar Pradesh

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has secured **financial approval of Rs 12,031 crore** under the **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) Mission 2.0**, aimed at constructing permanent pucca houses for the urban poor.

Key Points

- The scheme is being **closely monitored** by both **state and district-level officials** to ensure **timely delivery and quality standards**.
- **Geo-tagging and photographic documentation** will be mandatory to allow **real-time construction monitoring**.
- Houses will be equipped with **disaster-resilient features** to withstand earthquakes, floods, and other calamities.
- CM Yogi Adityanath has directed officials to ensure **strict adherence to quality and transparency**.

About Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - Urban (PMAY-U) 2.0

- **Launch Year:** 2024 (PMAY-U was originally launched in 2015)
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)
- Type: Centrally Sponsored Scheme

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- Interest Subsidy Scheme (ISS) component is Central Sector Scheme
- **Eligibility:** EWS/LIG/MIG families without pucca house; income up to ₹9 lakh
- **Benefits:** Subsidy for all-weather pucca houses
- **Target:** 1 crore urban families (construction, purchase, rental)
- **Total Outlay:** ₹10 lakh crore (₹2.3 lakh crore Central Assistance)
- **Coverage Area:** The scheme covers all statutory towns notified in the Census 2011 and towns notified subsequently by State Governments.
  - Notified Planning Areas and regions under Urban Development or Industrial Authorities are included under PMAY-U 2.0.

NHRC Hosts National Symposium on Women's Safety With University Of Lucknow

Why in News?

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), in collaboration with the **University of Lucknow**, held the **National Symposium on 'Women's Safety at Work and Public Spaces'**, amid growing concerns over gender-based violence in professional and public domains.

Key Points

- NHRC Chairperson **Justice V. Ramasubramanian**, highlighted the stark contrast between India's cultural reverence for women and the alarming frequency of violence, **51 FIRs every hour**.
  - He also underlined the long struggle leading to the **Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013**, and called for **systemic, enforcement-led, and awareness-driven reforms**.
  - He urged educators and society to foster **gender-sensitive behaviour**.
- **Institutional Gaps and Policy Suggestions:** Symposium noted the gaps in **law enforcement, institutional responsiveness**, and **public awareness**, stressing the need for:
- Greater **female representation** in decision-making bodies.
- Inclusion of the **informal sector** in women's safety discourse.
- Promotion of **SHE-Box**, **One Stop Centres**, and **Pink Police Booths**.
- Key Recommendations of Symposium:
- **Policy-implementation-awareness** triad must be addressed in unison.
- **Informal sector workers** need tailored outreach and protection.
- Sensitisation must begin at the **individual and familial level**.
- **Inclusive spaces and representation** for women must be institutionalised.
- **Educational institutions** should actively promote **gender awareness and conduct training**.

About National Human Rights Commission (NHRC)

- The NHRC of India is an autonomous **statutory body** established to promote and protect **human rights.**
- It was constituted on 12th October 1993 under the **Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993,** which was later amended in 2006 and 2019.
- The Commission was established in conformity with the **Paris Principles,** which are international standards adopted for promoting and protecting human rights.
  - The **Paris Principles** are the set of international standards adopted for the promotion and protection of human rights in Paris (October, 1991) and endorsed by the General Assembly of the **United Nations (UN)** on 20th December 1993.
  - These principles guide the work of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) across the world.
    - **Powers of NHRC: NHRC is vested with powers equivalent to those of a civil court** as per the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908.
    - **NHRC Investigation Team:** The NHRC has its own investigation team **led by a Director General of Police.**

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NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (NHRC)

According to NHRC, Human Rights are the rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the International Covenants and enforceable by courts in India

- Watchdog of Human Rights in India
- **Estd:** 1993 (in conformity with Universal Declaration of Human Rights)
- **Act:** Protection of Human Rights Act (PHRA), 1993

State Human Rights Commissions

- Also constituted under the PHR Act, 1993
- **Appointment of Members:** by Governor
- **Removal of Members:** by President

Human Rights Day: 10 December

Functions

- Investigates Complains of human rights violations
- *Suo Moto* cognizance of cases
- Reviews and recommends human rights implementation
- Spreading human rights awareness
- Conduct studies, publish reports on human rights issues

Powers

- Summon individuals, examine witnesses, and receive evidences
- Inspect prisons and other institutions to ensure conditions are humane
- Intervene in court proceedings relating to human rights

Members of NHRC

Composition

- 5 full-time members and 7 deemed members
- **Chairperson:** Retired CJI/Judges of the SC
- **Administrative Head:** Secretary-General

Tenure

- 3 years / till age 70 (whichever is earlier)

Appointment

- All members appointed by **President** on recommendations of a **6-member** committee (PM, Speaker of LS, Deputy Chairman of RS, Union Home Minister and Leaders of Opposition of both Houses of Parliament)

Removal

- President can remove the chairman or any member
- **Ground:** Charges of proved misbehaviour or incapacity

Global Alliance of National Human Rights Institutions (GANHRI) Status

- **NHRC** has been accredited '**A' Status** since **1999**
- **Retained 'A' Status:** 2006, 2011 and 2017
- **Suspension of 'A' Status:** 2023 and 2024

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PM Modi Celebrates Bundelkhand's Kalinjar Fort

Why in News?

In the 124th edition of his Mann Ki Baat address, **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** highlighted the historical importance of **Bundelkhand's Kalinjar Forts**, calling them symbols of **cultural pride** and **resilience**.

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- The Prime Minister urged citizens to explore these forts to connect with India's rich past and help boost tourism in the Bundelkhand region.

Key Points

- **Kalinjar Fort:** Bundelkhand's Kalinjar Fort is located in Tarahati, Banda district, Uttar Pradesh. The Fort is a historical monument perched **atop a hill in the Vindhya Range.**
  - It holds great cultural and historical value, combining features of both **giri durga** (hill fort) and **vana durga** (jungle fort).
- **Architecture**:
  - The fort features **seven gateways** (e.g., Alamgiri Gate, Ganesh Gate) and significant structures like **Neelkanth Temple** and **Qanati Mosque**.
  - It has Bundela architecture with **palaces**, **temples**, and **water tanks**.
  - Famous structures include the **Neelkanth Temple** with its massive Kal Bhairav sculpture, **Rani Mahal**, **Venkat Bihari Mahal**, and **Sher Shah's Tomb (his mortal remains were later brought to Sasaram, Bihar)**.
- **Defensive Strength**: The fort's **45-meter-high ramparts** made it virtually impregnable, surviving artillery attacks such as **cannonballs** that bounced off its walls.

Historical Legacy of Kalinjar Fort

- The fort has been associated with various dynasties such as the **Guptas, Gurjara-Pratiharas, Chandelas**, and **Mughals**.
  - **Mahmud of Ghazni (A.D. 1023):** Mahmud of Ghazni attempted to **Siege Kalinjar** but failed to breach its defenses. After an unsuccessful siege, the **Chandela Raja Ganda Deva** offered peace by presenting complimentary verses, and the fort was eventually surrendered without a complete conquest.
  - **Qutubuddin Aibek (Early 13th century):** After the rise of the **Delhi Sultanate**, **Qutubuddin Aibek**, a general of **Muhammad Ghori**, captured Kalinjar Fort, marking a significant shift in its control to Muslim rulers.
  - **Sher Shah Suri (1545): Sher Shah Suri died** in an accidental gunpowder explosion **during the siege of Kalinjar fort** on 13th May 1545.
  - **Mughals (1569):** Kalinjar was captured by the **Mughals** under **Akbar** in 1569 after Sher Shah's death. **Raja Birbal (one of** Akbar's **Navratnas)**, was granted the fort as a **jagir**.
  - **British (1812-1817):** The **British** took control of Kalinjar after it was surrendered by the local ruler **Daryau Singh** in 1812 following a siege by **Colonel Martindell**.
    - In the **1857 Uprising**, the fort's strong defenses were instrumental in withstanding the revolt, but it was eventually dismantled in 1866.

Japan to Set Up Green Hydrogen Production Centre in UP

Why in News?

In a significant step towards advancing **Uttar Pradesh's** renewable energy initiatives, a delegation from the state government recently visited Japan to **forge strategic partnerships** aimed at boosting green hydrogen production and energy innovation.

Key Points

- **Green Hydrogen Centre of Excellence**: Japanese entrepreneurs have agreed to **establish a Centre of Excellence** for green hydrogen in Uttar Pradesh, marking a pivotal development in the state's renewable energy landscape.
  - This collaboration will serve as a **catalyst for cutting-edge research,** innovation, and the adoption of sustainable energy solutions.
- **Focus on Zero-Emission Transport**: During the visit, the UP delegation explored several breakthrough technologies, including the **next-generation** hydrogen fuel cell **vehicle**, Toyota Mirai.
  - This vehicle runs on a combination of **hydrogen and oxygen,** emitting only water as a byproduct, aligning with Uttar Pradesh's vision for a **zero-emission transport policy.**

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- **Learning from Japan's Expertise**: The UP delegation visited **several advanced facilities** in Japan's Yamanashi Prefecture, including the NESRAD Green Hydrogen Plant and the Suntory Hakushu Distillery, which houses a power-to-gas technology plant and Hydrogen Research Centre.
  - These visits offered valuable insights into **international best practices** in hydrogen production and clean energy technologies.
- **Implications for Uttar Pradesh:**
  - **Renewable Energy Expansion:** Uttar Pradesh's collaboration with global leaders in green hydrogen will boost its renewable energy capacity, including solar, hydro, and biomass.
  - **Green Hydrogen Technological Advancements:** The adoption of advanced Japanese hydrogen fuel cell technology will drive cleaner, sustainable transport, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and contribute to the state's clean energy goals by diversifying renewable power generation methods.
  - **Economic Growth & Innovation:** The Centre of Excellence will position Uttar Pradesh as a **renewable energy hub,** attracting investments, **fostering innovation,** and creating new business opportunities and jobs.

Installed Capacity of Renewable Power of Uttar Pradesh

Type	MW (as on 30-06-2025)
Hydro (Large + Small)	551
Solar	3427

Hydrogen

- **Hydrogen is the most abundant element in the universe,** but on **Earth, it makes up only 0.14% of the Earth's crust by mass,** ranking as the **10th most abundant element.**
- The type of hydrogen depends on the process of its formation:
  - **Green hydrogen** is produced by **electrolysis of water using renewable energy** (like Solar, Wind) and has a lower carbon footprint.
    - Electricity splits water into hydrogen and oxygen.
    - By Products: Water, Water Vapor.
  - **Brown hydrogen is produced using coal,** where the emissions are released to the air.
  - **Grey hydrogen** is produced **from natural gas,** where the associated emissions are released to the air.
  - **Blue hydrogen** is produced from natural gas, where the **emissions are captured using carbon capture and storage.**

Yogi Adityanath's Longest Tenure As UP CM

Why in News?

Yogi Adityanath, the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, has established **a new record for both the longest tenure and also longest continuous tenure in office**.

Key Points

- **Tenure of Yogi Adityanath:** He completed **8 years, 4 months, and 10 days** in office, surpassing the previous record of **8 years and 127 days** held by Govind Ballabh Pant, the first Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh.
  - Pant, who served from **1947 to 1954**, was the first **Chief Minister of the state** and played a significant role in its early political landscape.

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- **Yogi Adityanath's Political Journey:** Yogi Adityanath first assumed office as CM in **2017**, after securing a landslide victory in the state elections.
  - He returned to power in **2022**, making him the **first person in 37 years** to win consecutive terms in Uttar Pradesh, which allowed him to extend his tenure without interruption.

Tenure of Uttar Pradesh Chief Ministers

- **Yogi Adityanath:** 8 years, 4 months, and 10 days (Current)
- **Govind Ballabh Pant:** 8 years, 127 days (Premier of United Provinces (1946-1950) and UP Chief Minister (1950-1954)
- **Mayawati:** 7 years, 16 days
- **Mulayam Singh Yadav:** 6 years, 274 days (3 times served as CM)
- **Sampurnanand:** 5 years, 345 days
- **Akhilesh Yadav:** 5 years, 4 days
- **Narayan Dutt Tiwari:** 3 years, 314 days (3 times served as CM)

Key Facts About Yogi Adityanath

- **Birth and Early Life**: Yogi Adityanath was born on **5th June 1972** in **Uttarakhand**.
  - He pursued **science** in his early education before becoming disillusioned with social issues, leading him to renounce worldly life at the age of **22** to embrace **sannyas**.
- **Spiritual Journey**: Under the mentorship of **Mahant Avadyanath Ji Maharaj**, Adityanath became the **successor** and head of the **Gorakhnath Peeth** in **1994**, at the age of 22.
  - His spiritual path, rooted in the **Nath Panth tradition**, focused on social reforms, Hindu renaissance, and spiritual growth.
- **Political Career**: In **1998**, Yogi Adityanath was elected as the **youngest Member of Parliament (MP)** at the age of **26** from **Gorakhpur**.
  - He has won the **Gorakhpur seat** consistently in **1999, 2004, 2009**, and **2014** with increasing votes, solidifying his influence.

Course At UPSIFS to Boost Policing Skills

Why in News?

The **Director General of Police (DGP), Rajeev Krishna,** inaugurated the **'Vertical Interaction Course'** at the **Uttar Pradesh State Institute of Forensic Science (UPSIFS)**, marking a significant step towards integrating legal, technological, and forensic expertise into the **policing system.**

Key Points

- **Objective:** The course, supported by the **Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD)**, aims to equip police officers with essential interdisciplinary skills to tackle emerging forms of crime, particularly in the cyber realm.
  - The DGP emphasized the importance of **law, technology, and forensics** in handling modern crimes, noting that this course integrates all three.
- **Advanced Digital Diagnostic Lab Inauguration:** He also inaugurated the newly developed **Advanced Digital Diagnostic Lab** at UPSIFS, designed to provide hands-on forensic training.
  - He stressed that the battlefield has moved to the **digital realm**, and for the police to keep up with rapidly adapting **cybercriminals**, training at all levels is crucial to mastering and applying these technologies.
- **Collaboration with BPRD:** The institute's founding director, **GK Goswami**, shared that two specialized courses have been launched in collaboration with BPRD. The first batch of IPS officers began their training on the same day.
  - He highlighted the importance of integrating legal and scientific knowledge for comprehensive criminal investigations, stating, "Our focus is **'Law with Lab'."**
- **Significance:** This initiative marks a significant advancement in the **integration of law, technology, and forensics in modern policing,** with the potential to better equip law enforcement agencies to handle **complex crimes in the digital age.**

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Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)

- **Establishment and Objectives:** The Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D) was officially established by the Government of India on 28th August 1970 under the **Ministry of Home Affairs.**
  - The primary purpose of the Bureau was to modernize the police force in India. The key objectives of BPR&D included:
    - Taking direct and active interest in **police-related issues**
    - Promoting **rapid and systematic research** into police problems
    - Applying science and technology to **improve police methods** and techniques
- **Expansion of Scope:** Over the years, BPR&D's scope expanded significantly. Key developments included:
  - **1983**: The **Directorate of Forensic Sciences** was established under BPR&D, reflecting the growing importance of forensic science in police investigations.
  - **1995**: The Government of India tasked BPR&D with addressing correctional administration, including **prison reforms,** to manage the evolving challenges in prison management.
- **Further Expansion:** In 2008, the creation of the **National Police Mission** under the supervision of BPR&D aimed to modernize the police forces further, enhancing their ability to maintain internal security.
  - In **2021**, BPR&D's responsibilities expanded once again to encompass:
    - Land and sea border management
    - Capacity building for **Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs)**
    - Addressing **emerging criminal laws** and evolving security challenges.

Vidyut Sakhi Programme

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government's **'Vidyut Sakhi' programme** has achieved remarkable success in revenue generation and empowering rural women, with an **11-fold increase in revenue recovery,** highlighting its **scalability, efficiency,** and the trust and reach of Vidyut Sakhis in their communities.

Key Points

- **About:** The programme was launched by the state's **Rural Development Department** as part of the **UP State Rural Livelihood Mission (UPSRLM)**, with the dual purpose of generating employment opportunities for rural women and filling a critical gap in the collection of electricity bills.
  - It provides **rural women** (mainly from **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)**) with employment opportunities by engaging them in electricity bill collection duties.
  - The initiative was particularly significant at a time when **reverse migration** and **job losses** were straining rural economies.
- **Scale:** Around **15,000 Vidyut Sakhis** have been actively involved in revenue collection to date, bringing in a total of **Rs 2,000 crore** for the government.
  - **30,000 women** are registered with the UPSRLM under the programme.
  - Another batch of **14,000 women** was trained for deployment as Vidyut Sakhis in 2024.
- **Benefits:** Vidyut Sakhis earned about **Rs 13.4 crore** in commissions in the financial year 2024-25. They collected **Rs 303 crore** under the **One-Time Settlement (OTS)** scheme, with **Rs 3.5 crore** in commission.
  - A total of 438 Vidyut Sakhis achieved the status of **'Lakhpati Didi'** by empowering women in SHGs to earn an annual household income of Rs 1,00,000 or more.
- **Revenue Growth:** In 2021-22, the Vidyut Sakhis **generated Rs 87 crore in revenue**, which surged to Rs 1,045 crore in 2024-25, marking an **over 11-fold increase,** and in the first quarter of **2025-26, the collection reached Rs 256 crore,** with expectations to surpass the previous year's total.

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Lakhpati Didi Initiative

- **About:** A "**Lakhpati Didi" is a member of an SHG** who has successfully achieved an annual household income of **Rupees One Lakh or more.**
  - This income is sustained across at **least four agricultural seasons** or business cycles, ensuring that the average monthly income exceeds Rupees Ten Thousand (Rs. 10,000).
  - It was initiated by the **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana- National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM),** wherein each SHG household is encouraged to take up multiple livelihood activities coupled with value chain interventions, resulting in a sustainable income of Rs. 1,00,000 or more per year.
- **Purpose:** The initiative aims to **empower women** not only by improving their income but by transforming their lives through sustainable livelihood practices.
  - These women serve as **role models in their communities,** demonstrating the power of effective resource management and entrepreneurship.

International Tiger Day and Increase Of Tiger Population in UP

Why in News?

Every year on **29th July**, **International Tiger Day (ITD)** is observed as a crucial reminder to protect and conserve tigers.

Key Point

- **History of ITD**: It was established during the **2010 Saint Petersburg Tiger Summit** in **Russia**.
  - The summit was convened after the **shocking decline of wild tigers**, with only **roughly 3,000** tigers remaining in the wild at that time.
  - The summit brought together **13 tiger-range nations**, including **Bangladesh**, **Nepal**, **India**, and **Russia**, aiming to address the declining tiger population.
  - The **Tx2 target**, set at the summit, aimed to **double the tiger population by 2022**, and while challenges remain, it laid the groundwork for concerted international efforts.
- **Theme of ITD 2025**: **Securing the future of Tigers with Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities at the heart.**
- **Role of Tigers in the Ecosystem:** As **keystone species**, they control the populations of prey species. Tiger-supported forests contribute to **water security** and act as **carbon sinks**, helping combat **climate change**.

Tiger Population in Uttar Pradesh

- **Rise in Tiger Population: Uttar Pradesh** has seen a steady rise in its tiger population (from **173 in 2018 to 222 in 2022**), with key reserves such as **Dudhwa Tiger Reserve** leading the way. The reserve now boasts **135 tigers**, up from **68 in 2014** and **82 in 2018**.
  - Other important areas include **Pilibhit (63 tigers)**, **Amangarh (20 tigers)**, and **Ranipur (4 tigers)**.
  - The state's tiger conservation success is attributed to several factors, including better **habitat management**, modern **patrolling systems**, and greater community involvement through initiatives like **Bagh Mitra**.
- **Bagh Mitra Initiative**: Launched in **2019**, the **Bagh Mitra initiative** has played a crucial role in reducing **human-wildlife conflicts**.
  - In **2023**, the program expanded with the introduction of a mobile app, enabling **real-time communication** between forest staff and local communities.
  - The initiative has also trained over **120 villagers** in **Pilibhit** as **Bagh Mitras**, who are responsible for reporting animal sightings via **WhatsApp** and the official app.
- **M-Stripes System and Patrolling**: Under the **M-Stripes system**, **forest staff** cover more than **1.5 lakh km monthly** across the **Dudhwa landscape.**
  - The system employs various modes of transport, including **vehicles, boats, elephants, bicycles, and foot patrols**.

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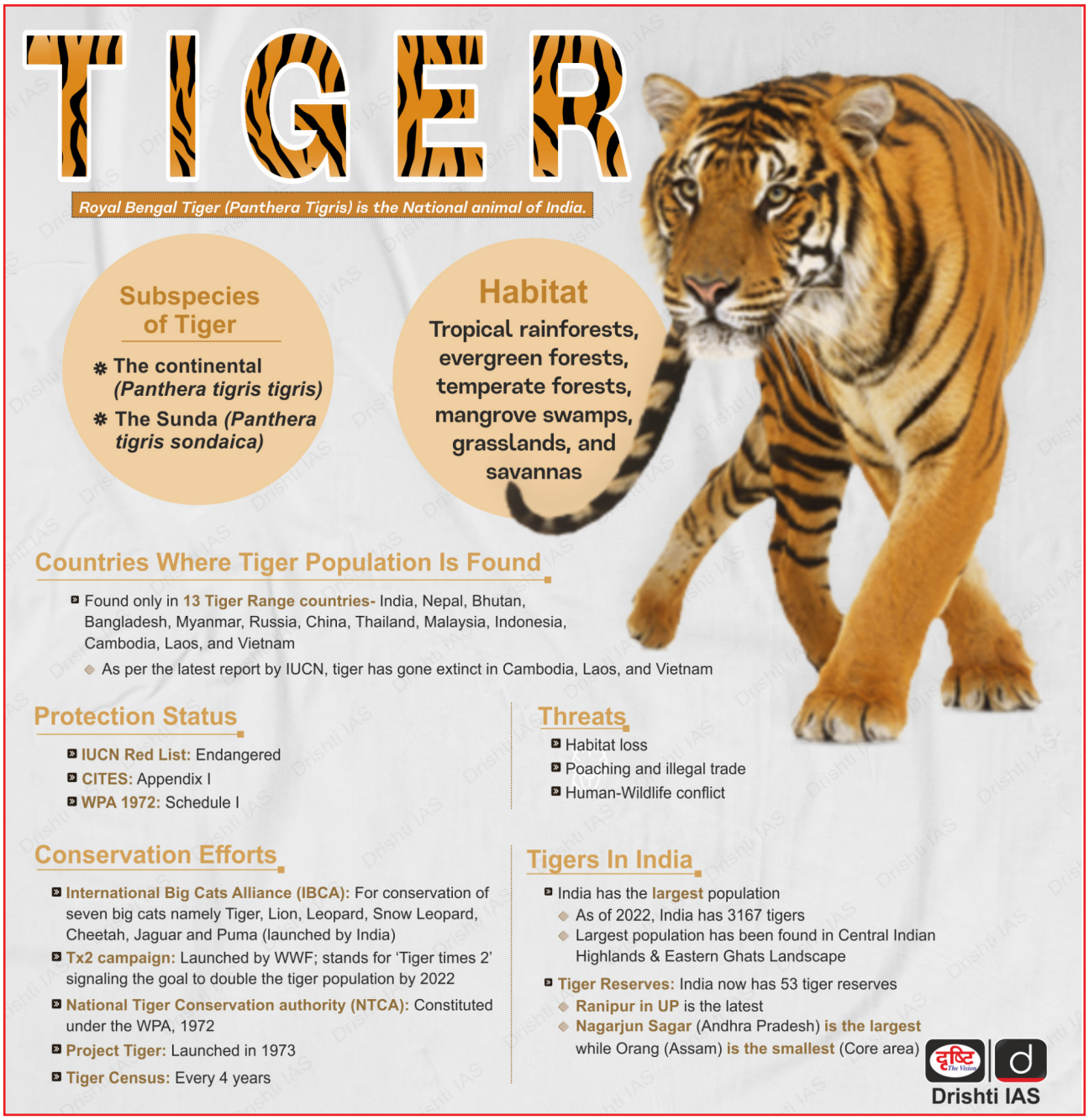

Holy Water Exchange Programme

Why in News?

On the third Monday (28th July 2025) of the sacred **Shrawan month**, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched a **historic holy water exchange programme** between the Kashi Vishwanath Temple and the Shri Rameswaram Jyotirlinga.

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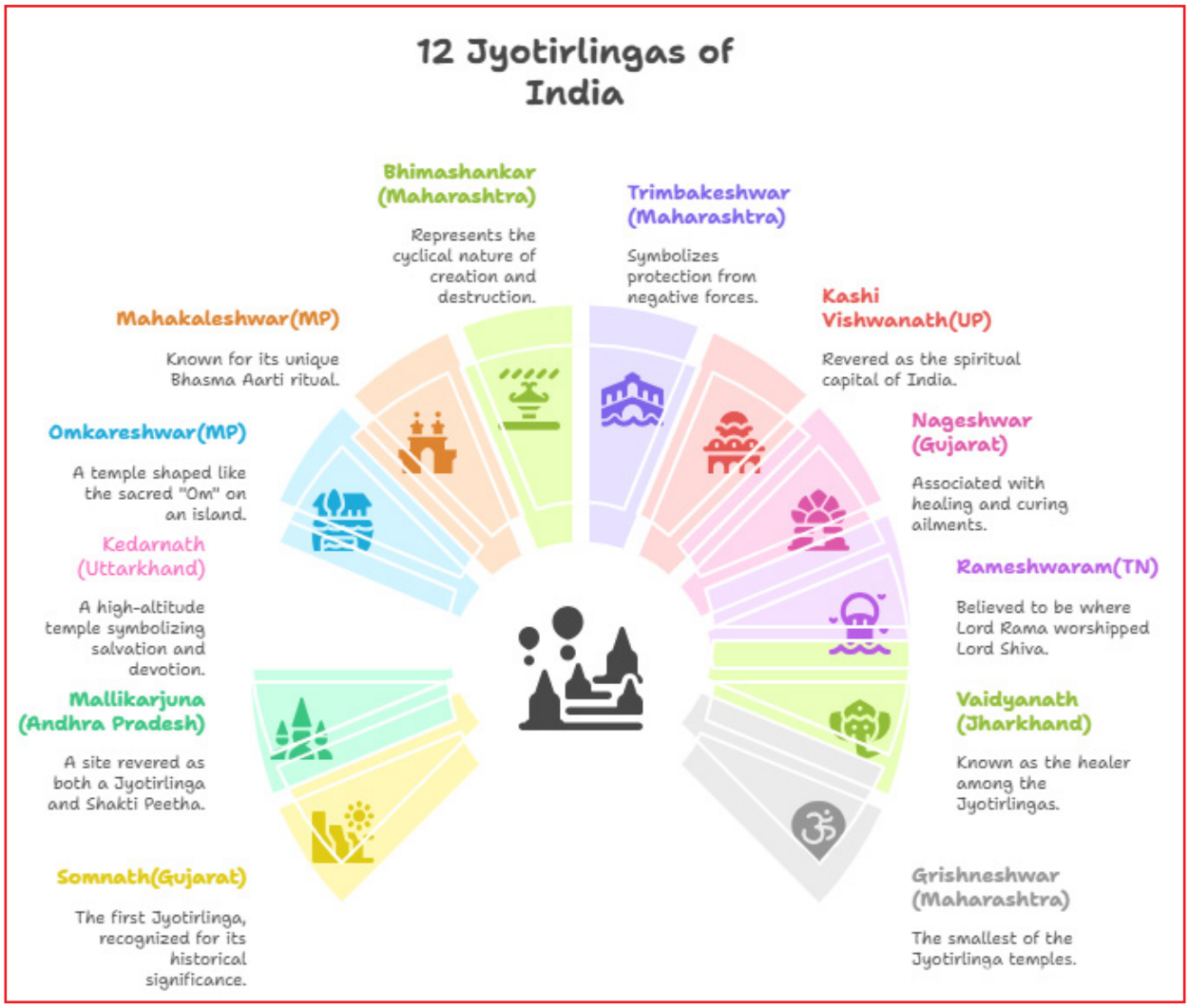

Key Points

- **Background:** The exchange programme is part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's **Kashi-Tamil Sangamam initiative**, aimed at fostering closer ties between the people of Kashi (Varanasi) and Tamil Nadu.
- **Sacred Water and Sands Exchange:** The exchange involved urns filled with sacred water and sands: **from Prayagraj's Triveni Sangam** (Holy confluence of **Ganga**, **Yamuna**, and mythical **Saraswati**) and **Rameswaram Kodi Tirtham** (Sacred water from the Rameswaram temple in Tamil Nadu).
  - These were exchanged between the representatives of the **Devakottai Zamindar Family Trust (DZFT)** of Shri Rameswaram Jyotirlinga and officials of **Kashi Vishwanath Temple Trust.**
  - The exchanged water will be used for the **'Jalabhishek' (ritual bathing)** of both **Lord Vishwanath and Lord Ramanathaswamy.**
- **Future Rituals:** The **Jalabhishek of Lord Vishwanath** will take place on **Shrawan Purnima**, **9th August 2025,** using the water brought from Rameswaram.
- **Significance:** This initiative strengthens the connection between Kashi and Tamil Nadu while reviving and preserving a sacred tradition for future generations, as described in the scriptures.

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Kashi Tamil Sangamam

- **About:** It is a **cultural initiative** that aims to celebrate the deep-rooted historical and cultural ties and strengthen the ancient civilizational bond between **Tamil Nadu and Kashi (Varanasi).**
  - The event aligns with the **Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat** initiative, emphasizing the integration of India's diverse cultural heritage.
  - The **3rd edition of Kashi Tamil Sangamam (KTS 3.0),** a cultural confluence between Tamil Nadu and Kashi, took place in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh in February 2025.
- **Historical Significance:**
  - The historical ties between Kashi (Uttar Pradesh) and Tamil Nadu date back to the 15th century when **King Parakrama Pandya of Madurai** traveled to Kashi to bring back a sacred lingam for his temple (Sivakasi, Tamil Nadu).
  - The Pandya rulers also established the **Kasi Viswanathar Temple** in Tenkasi, located in southwestern Tamil Nadu, near the Kerala border.
  - This deep-rooted spiritual and cultural connection underscores the essence of the Kashi Tamil Sangamam initiative.

Weather Information Network and Data System (WINDS) Project

Why in News?

The state government has **allocated Rs 9.77 crore** for the **Weather Information Network and Data System (WINDS) project**, out of a total of Rs 60 crore allocated for the current fiscal year (2025-26).

Key Points

- **About:** WINDS is a programmatic initiative to **strengthen weather data infrastructure** in the country and to **provide good-quality weather datasets** from a single digital platform.
  - Launched by the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare** in July 2023, it is a **national-level initiative** that integrates the existing infrastructure and expertise available with the **Indian Meteorological Department (IMD)**, various State Governments, and public/private technical organizations.
- **Objective**: The WINDS project aims to provide **hyper-local weather forecasting** to boost agricultural productivity.
- **Components:** The project will involve the installation of **weather stations** and rain gauges at the block and panchayat levels.
  - **Weather Stations**: A total of **308 automatic weather stations** will be installed in selected blocks to provide **precise and real-time weather data for local areas.**
  - **Rain Gauges**: Around 55,570 rain gauges will be set up across gram panchayats **to measure rainfall and determine local rainfall patterns**.

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- **Additional Infrastructure**:
  - **518 weather stations** are under construction by the revenue department and the **Indian Meteorological Department (IMD).**
- **Expected Benefits:**
  - **Agricultural Productivity**: With **precise weather forecasts**, farmers will be better prepared for **extreme weather events** like droughts, floods, and storms.
    - This will help farmers take preemptive measures to protect their crops and plan for optimal harvesting times.
  - **Risk Assessment & Loss Estimation**: WINDS will assist in estimating losses caused to **horticultural crops** during extreme weather conditions, helping stakeholders respond effectively.
  - **Crop Insurance & Agriculture Programs**: The weather data will be used to **decide crop insurance** and aid in other agricultural programs, thus boosting overall productivity.
  - **Air Quality Monitoring**: The project also focuses on improving **air quality monitoring** through the development of low-cost, reliable, sensor-based systems.
  - **Technological Advantage:** WINDS employs **advanced weather data analytics** to provide actionable insights for agriculture.
    - The system aims to generate **hyper-local weather data**, which will support farmers in making informed decisions regarding irrigation, sowing, and harvesting.

CM Yogi Awards Over Jobs to Athletes

Why in News?

On the occasion of Nag Panchami, during the conclusion of the **Uttar Pradesh Senior Wrestling Competition held at Gorakhnath Temple, CM** Yogi Adityanath announced that over **500 athletes in Uttar Pradesh have been provided with government jobs** as part of the state's commitment to promoting sports.

Key Points

- **Wrestling Awards and Recognition**: During the wrestling competition, the CM awarded prestigious titles such as **UP Kesari**, **UP Kumar**, and **UP Veer Abhimanyu** to the winners. The awardees included:
  - **UP Kesari**: Jonty Bhati (Gautam Buddh Nagar) received **₹1.01 lakh** and a mace.
  - **UP Kumar**: Saurabh (Gorakhpur) received **₹1.01 lakh** and a mace.
  - **UP Veer Abhimanyu**: Monu (Gonda) received **₹51,000** and a mace.
- The CM also awarded **₹21,000** to third-place winners and **₹11,000** to the fourth-place winners in each category.
- **Government Jobs for Athletes**: Under the state's sports policy, athletes who have excelled in **Olympics**, **Asian Games**, **Commonwealth Games**, **World Championships**, and **National Games** are being provided with **government employment**.
- **Sports Infrastructure Development**: CM emphasized the government's efforts over the last eight years to develop **sports infrastructure** at the **village, block, and district levels**.
  - Key developments include the construction of sports grounds at the village level, **mini-stadiums** at the block level, and full **stadiums** at the district level.
- **Role of Sports in Personal and Social Development**: Reflecting on the importance of sports, CM Yogi quoted a phrase from ancient Indian philosophy, **"Sharir Madhyam Khalu Dharm Sadhanam"**, meaning that a **healthy body is essential for the fulfillment of religious duties**.

Key Points of the Uttar Pradesh Sports Policy 2023

- **Creation of Uttar Pradesh Sports Development Fund (UPSDF)**: **₹10 crore fund** to support infrastructure, athletes, associations, and academies, especially those lacking resources.
- **Institutional Support**: Formation of a **State Sports Authority** to manage sports policy, talent mapping, and infrastructure development.

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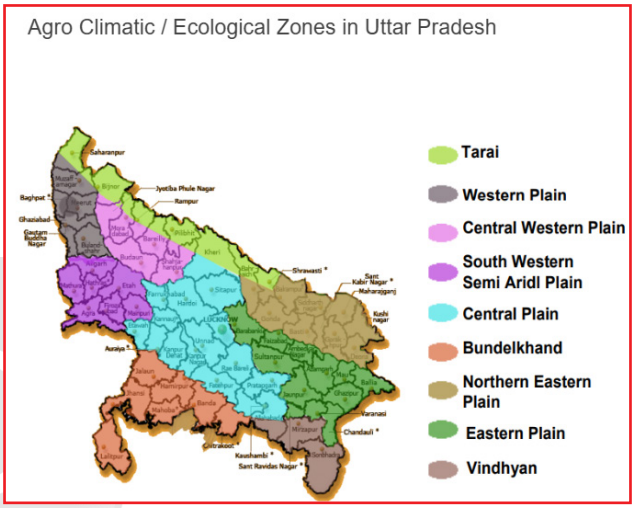
- **Centers of Excellence & Infrastructure**:
  - Up to **14 sports-specific Centres of Excellence** under the **PPP model**.
  - **Five High Performance Centres** for elite training.
  - Sports centers in every district with improved facilities (hostels, fitness experts, diet experts).
  - Focus on **district, block, and village-level sports infrastructure** (stadiums, mini-stadiums, playgrounds).
- **Athlete Development**: Athletes divided into **three tiers**: Grassroots (beginner), Developmental (talented) and Elite (top performers).
- **Focus on Inclusivity**:
  - Special emphasis on **women's participation** and **para-athletes** (with **exclusive coaches)**.
  - **Cashless health insurance** up to ₹5 lakh for registered players, coaches, and families under the Ayushman scheme.
  - **State pension** for players who represented UP nationally/internationally.
- **Promotion of E-Sports and Indigenous Games**: **First state in India to include e-sports in official policy.**
  - Encouragement of **indigenous/local games**.
- **Linkage with Education**: **40 minutes of sports, physical education, or yoga** included in school timetables.
  - Promotion of **sports nurseries/academies** in schools.
- **Sports Industry and Tourism**: Support for making UP a hub for **sports goods manufacturing** (e.g., Meerut cluster).
  - Boosting **sports tourism**.
- **Comprehensive Talent Search & Khelo India Integration**: Active participation in **Khelo India University Games**.
  - **Talent identification** through university and academy competitions.
- **Health and Welfare Measures**: **Eklavya Sports Fund** for injury treatment and welfare.
  - **Personal accident insurance** for athletes and coaches.

Uttar Pradesh to Establish 5 Seed Parks

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government is aiming to make the state **self-reliant in high-quality seed production** by establishing **five state-of-the-art seed parks** across different **agro-climatic zones.**



Key Points

- **About:** The seed parks will **address region-specific crop needs** and ensure the availability of quality seeds, with an **investment of Rs 2,500 crore** over the **next three years.**
  - The agriculture department has **identified six large farms** with existing infrastructure (ranging from 200 to 400+ hectares), which will be leased to private entities for seed production.
- **Locations:** The Seed Parks will be established in Western UP, Terai, Central UP, Bundelkhand, and Eastern UP.
  - The **first seed park**, named after former Prime Minister **Chaudhary Charan Singh**, will be established in **Attari, Lucknow**. It will feature facilities for seed production, processing, storage, speed breeding, and hybrid laboratories.

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- **Model:** The government is using a **Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model,** offering incentives to private investors, with land leases for 30 years, extendable up to 90 years.
- **Benefit:** Uttar Pradesh, with its **large agricultural base**, stands to benefit greatly from this initiative. Key benefits include:
  - **Job Creation:** Across all five parks, approximately **6,000 direct jobs** and **15,000 indirect jobs** will be generated, benefiting nearly **40,000 seed-producing farmers.**
  - **Self-Reliance in Seed Production:** The state expects to save around **Rs 3,000 crore annually** by producing seeds locally, strengthening the **local economy**, and creating jobs in production, logistics, and transport.
  - **Seed Replacement Rate (SRR):** This initiative is expected to improve the **SRR**, directly impacting crop yields.
  - **Potential Yield Improvement:** Officials estimate that better seed availability could narrow the yield gap by **15-20%**.
    - Uttar Pradesh has the **largest cultivable land** and the highest irrigated area in the country, but lags behind states like Punjab and Haryana in **per-hectare yields.**
  - **Quality Issues:** The establishment of these seed parks will ensure better seed quality for farmers across Uttar Pradesh.
    - **Poor-quality seeds,** identified in 3,630 out of 1,33,588 tested samples in the 2023-2024 **Seed Test Report,** lead to low germination rates, delayed re-sowing, wasted investments in land preparation and fertilizers, and ultimately, reduced crop yields.

UP's 1st Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (TAVI)

Why in News?

The **LPS Cardiology Institute in Kanpur** has become the **first government medical college in Uttar Pradesh** to offer **TAVI (Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation) for heart valve replacement** in elderly patients.

- **TAVI avoids open-heart surgery** by implanting a **new valve without intense invasive procedure**. It promises to reduce risks and improve the quality of life for senior heart patients.

Key Points

- **TAVI:** TAVI is a **minimally invasive procedure** that **involves implanting a new aortic valve using a catheter** inserted through a vein in the patient's leg.
  - Unlike traditional open-heart surgery, TAVI avoids the need for large incisions, reducing recovery time and risks, especially for elderly patients.
- **Procedure and Benefits:** The new valve, made from the membrane of animal hearts, is implanted in place of the damaged valve.
  - Unlike metal valves, which come with higher risks, animal membrane valves have a longer lifespan of 15 years.
- **Global Significance and History:** The TAVI technique was pioneered by German specialist Dr. Alain Kreebeyer in the early 1990s and was first implemented in 2002.
  - India adopted this innovative procedure in 2010.

Human Heart

- **Function**: Pumps blood throughout the body via blood vessels, supplying oxygen and nutrients, and removing waste products.
- **Heart Wall**:
  - **Epicardium**: Outer layer.
  - **Myocardium**: Middle muscular layer (responsible for heart contraction).
  - **Endocardium**: Inner lining.
- **Chambers of the Heart**:
  - **Atria** (upper chambers): Receive blood.
  - **Ventricles** (lower chambers): Pump blood.
  - **Right Heart**: Right atrium + right ventricle.
  - **Left Heart**: Left atrium + left ventricle.
  - **Septum**: Divides the left and right sides of the heart.
- **Heart Valves**: Prevent backflow of blood, ensuring one-direction flow.

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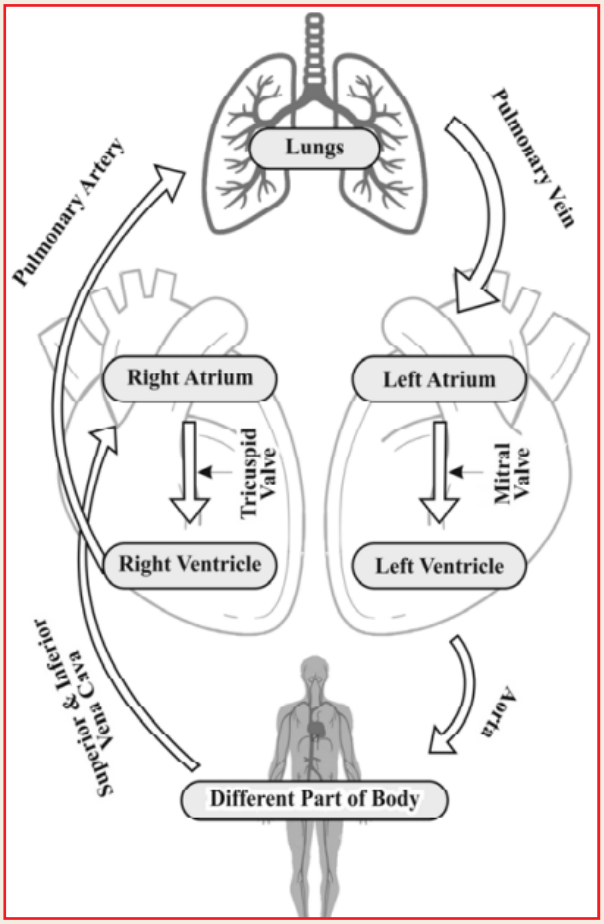

- **Pacemaker and Heart Rhythm**: Controlled by the **Sinoatrial (SA) Node**, generating electrical impulses.
  - **Heart rate: 60-100 beats per minute** at rest.
- **Blood Flow**:
  - **Deoxygenated Blood**: From body → right atrium → right ventricle → lungs (oxygenated).
  - **Oxygenated Blood**: From lungs → left atrium → left ventricle → body.
- **Tachycardia**:
  - Heart rate > 100 beats per minute.
  - Caused by stress, medications, or underlying heart conditions.
- **Key Figures**:
  - **William Harvey**: Discovered blood circulation.
  - **Dr. Christian Barnard**: First successful heart transplant in 1967.

Delhi to Adopt UP's Digital Grievance Redressal Model

Why in News?

Delhi is set to adopt Uttar Pradesh (UP)'s **Integrated Grievance Redressal System (IGRS)** and the **CM Dashboard** to **improve governance** and ensure **efficient grievance management**.

Key Points

- **About:** IGRS is a **comprehensive grievance redressal system** in Uttar Pradesh aimed at promoting **good governance** through the use of advanced technology and involving all stakeholders.
- **Key Features:**
  - Citizens can easily and conveniently **file grievances, track them** across various platforms, and receive timely and satisfactory responses in terms of both quality and resolution.
  - The system allows citizens to **interact transparently with Government Departments/Offices,** facilitating a smooth communication process.
  - All complaints, regardless of the source, are **centralized on a single platform,** enhancing accessibility, monitoring, and effective resolution by relevant departments.

UP-DARPAN Dashboard (CM Dashboard)

- **UP-DARPAN** Dashboard for the Chief Minister helps in **analytical review of projects/schemes** through department ranking, district ranking, Timeline Series, and Statistical Graphical reports.
  - D A R P A N (Dashboard for Analytical Review of Projects Across Nation) is a configurable multilingual product of the **National Informatics Centre (NIC).**
    - It facilitates the presentation of **real-time data on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)** of selected government schemes/ projects to all the levels (State, Division, District) of officers for planning, evaluation, and monitoring.

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- DARPAN provides seamless authentication and integration with the user repository through **secure APIs** for automatic update of data on a predefined frequency.

UP First in India to Use AI for Road Safety

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh has become the **first Indian state** to launch an **Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Big Data Analytics based Road Safety Pilot Project**, approved by the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH)**.

- The state government has **allocated Rs 10 crore in its 2025-26 Budget** to develop a **'data-driven administrative model'** for the Transport Department.

Key Points

- **Project Partners:** The pilot project will be **executed at no cost by the public sector enterprise ITI Limited**, in collaboration with the global technology **firm mLogica**.
  - The Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) holds no financial liability for the project.
- **Comprehensive AI Integration:** The project will **analyse accident reports**, weather conditions, vehicle details, **driver records,** and road infrastructure to identify **causes of accidents** and detect **black spots** on highways.
  - It will focus on data collection and the creation of a **predictive AI model** to trace accident patterns and high-risk zones.
- **Real-Time Dashboard:** A **policy dashboard** will be developed to monitor vehicle movements, violations, income records, and enforcement data — all in real time.
- **Fraud Detection & E-Challan Monitoring:** The system will automatically flag **fraudulent applications**, **track vehicle locations**, aid in **on-the-spot enforcement**, and **e-challan recovery**.
- **Wider Integration:** Around **5 crore vehicles** and **3 crore driving licence holders** will be linked to the system.
  - AI will be extended to **other transport services** like **faceless issuance of driving licences and permits**, application approvals, and document printing.
- **Legality of Project:** The Ministry also emphasized that the initiative must fully adhere to the **Motor Vehicles Act, 1988**, the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, and all road safety standard operating procedures (SOPs).

145th Birth Anniversary Of Munshi Premchand

Why in News?

On the **eve of Munshi Premchand's 145th birth anniversary**, **Postmaster General Krishna Kumar Yadav** highlighted the deep connection between Premchand and the postal family.

- He also emphasized **Premchand's transition from idealism to realism**, which makes his **work highly relevant to today's social environment**, particularly in addressing ongoing issues such as **poverty, casteism, gender discrimination, and exploitation.**

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Key Facts About Munshi Premchand

- **About:** Munshi Premchand, born as **Dhanpat Rai Srivastava on 31st July 1880, in Lamhi village near Varanasi,** is considered one of the most influential novelists, storywriters, and **thinkers in Hindi and Urdu literature.**
  - After Premchand's first unsuccessful marriage, he **remarried Shivarani Devi** (in 1906), **a child widow,** which was considered a **revolutionary act at that time.**
  - His wife, **Shivarani Devi**, wrote a memoir titled **'Premchand Ghar Mein'** after his death.
- **Early Life and Education:** Premchand was born to **Munshi Ajaib Lal (**a post office clerk) and **Anandi Devi**.
  - He learned **Urdu** and **Persian** early on and attended **missionary school** for English education. He completed his **matriculation** in 1898 and went on to earn a **B.A.** in **1919** from **Allahabad University**, specializing in **English**, **Persian**, and **History**.
- **Career Path:** From **1899 to 1921**, Premchand worked as a **school teacher** and a **Deputy Sub-Inspector of Schools**.
  - In **1921**, he resigned from government service in response to Gandhi's non-cooperation movement.
- **Literary Career and Pen Names:** Initially, he wrote under the pen name **'Nawab Rai'**, a childhood nickname. He later adopted **'Premchand'** after the **British colonial government banned his collection 'Soz-e-Watan'** in **1910**.
  - His literary brilliance earned him the title **'Upanyas Samrat' (Emperor of Novels) and 'Magician of the Pen'** from contemporary Hindi writers.
- **Major Contributions to Literature:** Premchand is considered the **pioneer of realism** in **Hindi and Urdu literature**.
  - He is known for writing over **300 short stories** and **18 novels**, most notably **'Godan,' 'Kafan,' 'Pus Ki Raat,'** and **'Panch Parmeshwar'**, which resonate even today for their critique of **society and human emotion**.
  - He contributed to leading **Hindi and Urdu journals** such as **'Zamana,' 'Saraswati,' 'Madhuri,' 'Maryaada,' 'Chaand,'** and **'Sudha.'** He also edited and published the prominent **Hindi newspaper, 'Jagran,'** and the **literary magazine 'Hans.'**
  - Premchand purchased **Saraswati Press,** but it eventually suffered losses and shut down. Later, he moved to **Mumbai** to **write film scripts**.
- **Modern Recognition: Premchand's literary legacy** continues to thrive, with the **Sahitya Akademi Premchand Fellowships** established in **2005** to honor his memory.
  - Many of his works have been adapted into films, including **Satyajit Ray's 'Shatranj Ke Khiladi'** (1977). His stories have been translated into numerous Indian and international languages, further cementing his place as a literary icon.
  - The **period from 1918 to 1936** is regarded as the **'Premchand Era' in the field of Hindi literature,** during which **his works** continued to touch upon **themes of social justice, equality, and freedom**, remaining relevant even in today's world.
  - The **Department of Posts issued a Commemorative Postage Stamp in 1980** to honor his immense contribution to Indian literature and society.
- **Final Years and Legacy:** Premchand was elected as the **first president of the All-India Progressive Writers' Association** in **1936**.
- **Death:** He passed away on **8th October 1936** in **Varanasi** at the age of 56.

Salkhan Fossil Park Added to UNESCO Tentative List

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh's Salkhan Fossil Park, also known as Sonbhadra Fossils Park, has been included in **UNESCO's Tentative List of World Heritage Sites**.

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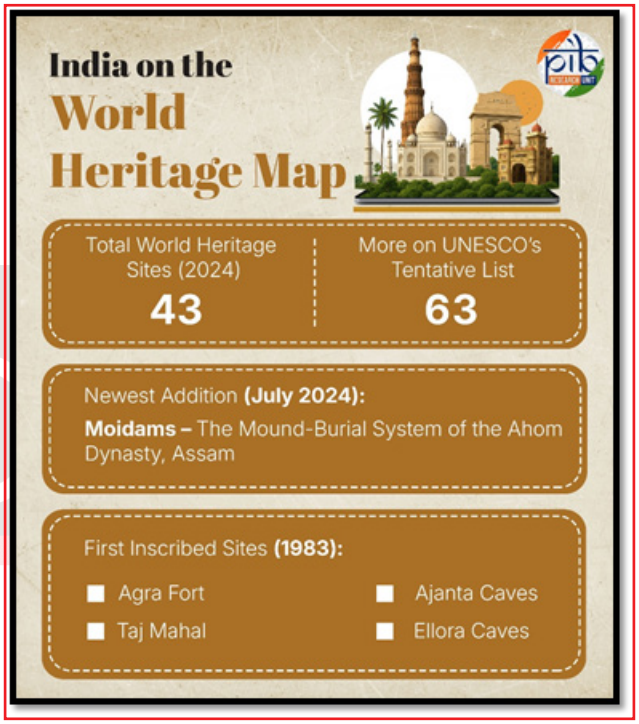
Key Points

- **About Salkhan Fossil Park:**
  - Located in Salkhan village in the **Sonbhadra district** of **Uttar Pradesh**, the park spans 25 hectares within the scenic **Kaimur Range**, adjacent to **Kaimoor Wildlife Sanctuary.**
  - Though geological interest in the site dates back to the 1930s, it was **officially declared a fossil park in 2002.**
  - Salkhan Fossil Park preserves **stromatolites**, rare layered sedimentary structures formed by **ancient cyanobacteria** (blue-green algae).
    - **Cyanobacteria**, emerging around **3.5 billion years ago**, were likely the **first organisms to perform oxygenic photosynthesis**, triggering the **Great Oxidation Event (~2.4 billion years ago)**, which enriched Earth's atmosphere with oxygen, enabling complex life.
  - These photosynthesizing microorganisms belong to the **Mesoproterozoic Era** (1.6–1.0 billion years ago), making the fossils up to 1.4 billion years old.
  - Such formations are globally rare, placing Salkhan among the oldest fossil sites in the world, older than **Shark Bay (Australia) and Yellowstone (USA).**
- **Challenging Scientific Assumptions:**
  - Discoveries at Salkhan have transformed scientific understanding of early life.
  - Previously, scientists believed life began around 570 million years ago, but the ancient stromatolites here predate that timeline.
    - A key development in this scientific observation was the **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)**, between the **UP eco-tourism development board** and the **Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences, Lucknow.**
  - The fossils provide vital clues into the **Earth's earliest biosphere** and the **evolution of oceanic ecosystems.**



World Heritage Sites (WHS)

- WHS are locations recognized for their **outstanding universal value to humanity** and are inscribed on the **World Heritage List** for protection and preservation for future generations.
  - These sites may be **cultural, natural, or mixed** in nature. **WHS** are safeguarded under the **World Heritage Convention, 1972**, an international agreement adopted by **UNESCO member countries.**
  - The Convention outlines the responsibilities of **State Parties** in identifying, protecting, and preserving such sites.

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- The list of WHS are maintained by the international **'World Heritage Programme'**, administered by the **UNESCO World Heritage Committee.**
- **India ratified** the Convention in **1977.**

- As of **June 2025**, India has **43 World Heritage Sites** (34 Cultural, 7 Natural, and 2 Mixed) and **63 sites on the Tentative List.**

Defence Materials and Stores Research & Development Establishment (DMSRDE)

Why in News?

Raksha Rajya Mantri Shri Sanjay Seth visited the **Defence Materials and Stores Research & Development Establishment (DMSRDE)** in Kanpur, a key DRDO laboratory, and **appreciated its contributions to indigenous defence technologies, especially in the context of Operation Sindoor.**

Key Points

- **Recognition for Indigenous Defence Innovations:**
  - DMSRDE received appreciation for its significant **contributions to the development of advanced defence systems** and **indigenous products.**
  - **Key achievements include:**
    - **Bullet Proof Jacket (Level-6)**-- Lightest bulletproof jacket in the country
    - Naphthyl Fuel for the **BrahMos missile**
    - High-Pressure Polymeric Membranes for Indian Coast Guard ships
    - Silicon Carbide Fibres
    - Activated **Carbon Fabric-based Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Suits**
    - A range of stealth materials enhancing battlefield survivability
- **Leading in Technology Transfer and Industry Collaboration:**
  - DMSRDE **carried out the highest number of technology transfers** among all DRDO labs over the past two years.
  - The lab has intensified its focus on collaboration with industry and academia, aligning with the national vision of achieving a developed India (Viksit Bharat) by 2047.
- **Broader Contributions:**
  - Showcased innovations in nano-materials, technical textiles, camouflage systems, coatings, rubbers, and lubricants.
  - It reinforces DRDO's commitment to developing cutting-edge dual-use technologies.
- **About DRDO:**
  - DRDO was **established in 1958** by merging the **Technical Development Establishment (TDEs)** of the Indian Army, the **Directorate of Technical Development and Production (DTDP)**, and the **Defence Science Organisation (DSO).**
    - DRDO is the R&D wing of the **Ministry of Defence**, Government of India.
    - It initially had 10 laboratories; it currently operates 41 laboratories and 5 DRDO Young Scientist Laboratories (DYSLs).
  - **Philosophy:** The guiding principle of DRDO is **"Balasya Mulam Vigyanam" (Strength lies in science)**, driving the nation in both peace and war.
  - **Mission:** Achieve **self-reliance in critical defence technologies** and systems while equipping the Indian armed forces with state-of-the-art weapon systems and equipment, as per the requirements of the three Services.

BrahMos Missile

- An Indo-Russian joint venture, the BrahMos missile **has a range of 290 km and is the world's fastest cruise missile** with a top speed of Mach 2.8 (about three times the speed of sound).
  - It is named after the **Brahmaputra River of India** and the **Moskva River of Russia.**
- It is a two-stage **(solid propellant engine in the first stage and liquid ramjet in the second)** missile.
- It is a multiplatform missile which **can be launched with great accuracy from land, air and sea having multi-capability capabilities** and can operate during day and night despite bad weather.

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- It operates on the **"fire and forget" principle** i.e., it does not require guidance after launch.

Operation Sindoor

- **About:** Operation Sindoor was a coordinated precision strike operation launched by the Indian Armed Forces on 7th May 2025, in retaliation for the Pahalgam terror attack.
  - It was executed through the coordinated efforts of the **Army, Navy, and Air Force**, conducted from Indian territory.
  - Unlike past operations with aggressive names meant to project strength, this operation's name was chosen as a **personal tribute to the victims**, particularly the **widows of the Pahalgam attack.**
- **Targets:** Under 'Operation Sindoor,' the Indian Armed Forces targeted terror facilities linked to Jaish-e-Mohammed, **Lashkar-e-Taiba, and Hizbul Mujahideen** in Pakistan and PoJK.
  - These strikes aimed to dismantle terrorist infrastructure used for planning attacks against India.

Green Data Centre in Ghaziabad

A state-of-the-art **Green** Data Centre has been inaugurated in **Sahibabad, Ghaziabad**.

Key Points:

- **Project Details**: The project is a joint initiative between Central Electronics Limited (CEL), a PSU under the **Ministry of Science & Technology**, and ESDS.
  - It involves an estimated investment of ₹1,000 crore and will have a 30 MW capacity.
- **Infrastructure & Sustainability**: The data centre will use energy-efficient technologies, renewable energy, and eco-friendly designs.
- **Connectivity & Resilience**: It will feature a 40 Gbps ring fibre network and dual 10 Gbps connections for cloud ntegration and disaster recovery.
  - Sustainable features include **rainwater harvesting, reflective roofing, and smart cooling systems**.

Uttar Pradesh Data Center Policy 2021

- **Vision & Mission:** To position Uttar Pradesh as the preferred investment destination for the Data Center industry.
  - To develop a world-class **Data Center** ecosystem by attracting global and domestic investment and supporting MSMEs/start-ups.
- **Targets:**
  - Develop 900 MW Data Center capacity in the state.
  - Attract investment worth ₹30,000 crore.
  - Establish at least 8 private state-of-the-art Data Center Parks.
- **Nodal Agency:** The **Department of IT & Electronics,** Uttar Pradesh, will appoint a Nodal Agency to implement the policy.
- **Definitions:**
  - **Data Center Park**: Must have a minimum capacity of 40 MW.
  - **Data Center Unit**: Should be between >2 MW and <40 MW; captive data centers are excluded.
- **Incentives for Data Center Parks:** Data Center Parks are eligible for up to **60% interest subsidy** for 7 years, subject to a maximum of ₹10 crore per year and an overall ceiling of ₹50 crore per park.
  - **Land subsidies** of **25%** (in Madhyanchal and Paschimanchal) and **50%** (in Bundelkhand and Purvanchal) are available, capped at **7.5% of total project cost or ₹75 crore**, whichever is lower.
  - These land subsidies apply only to the **first 8 parks** notified under the policy and are not applicable to Data Center Units within those parks if already claimed.
  - **Stamp duty exemption** is provided—**100% on the first transaction** and **50% on the second**—along with **dual power grid supply**.
- **Incentives for Data Center Units:** Data Center Units can avail a **7% capital subsidy** on fixed capital investment (excluding land and building) up to **₹20 crore**, disbursed over 10 years with a cap of **₹2 crore annually**.

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- Units are also eligible for **land subsidies—25% in Madhyanchal and Paschimanchal** and **50% in Bundelkhand and Purvanchal**, subject to the same overall limit of **7.5% of project cost or ₹75 crore**.

IOC Gets First Woman President

Why in News?

On 23rd June 2025, **Kirsty Coventry** became the **first female and first African president** of the **International Olympic Committee (IOC)**, coinciding with the IOC's 131st anniversary.

- **Thomas Bach,** the outgoing president who completed his 12-year term starting in 2013, now assumes the **honorary title of IOC President.**

Key Points

About Kirsty Coventry

- **Olympic Success:** She is **Zimbabwe's most successful Olympian**, having won seven of the country's eight Olympic medals to date.
  - No African athlete has won more Olympic medals than Coventry, who specialized in backstroke and medley swimming.
- **Olympic Medals:** At the Athens 2004 Olympics, she won three medals: a gold in the 200m backstroke, a silver in the 100m backstroke, and a bronze in the 200m medley.
  - She defended her 200m backstroke title at Beijing 2008 and added three silver medals.
- **World Titles and Retirement:** Coventry won three long-course world titles in 2005 and 2009, along with four short-course gold medals in 2008.
  - She retired from competitive swimming after the **Rio 2016 Olympics**, marking her fifth Olympic appearance.
- **Government Role:** In September 2018, she was appointed as Zimbabwe's Minister of Youth, Sport, Arts, and Recreation.
- **IOC Involvement:** Elected to the IOC in 2013 as a **member of the Athletes' Commission,** she was re-elected as an individual IOC member in 2021.
- **Role as IOC President:**
  - She will oversee the Olympic Winter Games Milano Cortina 2026 as her first Olympic Games.
  - She will also be overseeing the selection of the **2028 Summer Games** host city.
    - Potential bids from **Qatar and Saudi Arabia** are under consideration, with the IOC's new process allowing fast-tracking of a preferred candidate.
  - She will hold a **closed-door session** with around 100 IOC members, including current and former heads of state, business leaders, athletes, and Olympic sports leaders.
  - She emphasized her role as a "guardian" of the Olympic platform, dedicated to inspiring, changing lives, and bringing hope worldwide, while **leading** the International Olympic Committee **for the next eight years.**

International Olympic Committee (IOC)

- The IOC is a **non-governmental international organisation** based in Lausanne, Switzerland, that came into existence in 1894.
- The **IOC decides the rules and regulations** of the Olympic Games and when and where the next Olympic event will be held.
- The IOC is a **permanent organisation that elects its own members,** with each member **speaking French or English** and being a citizen of or residing in a country with a National Olympic Committee.

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- The IOC is the final authority on all questions concerning the Olympic Games and the Olympic movement.

- The IOC aims to ensure the **regular holding of the Olympic Games** and foster Olympism and the Olympic movement.
  - **Olympism is a philosophy that blends sport, culture, education, and international cooperation,** emphasizing the joy of effort, the educational value of good examples, social responsibility, and respect for universal ethical principles.
  - The goal of the Olympic Movement is to **contribute to building a peaceful and better world** by educating youth through sports practised in accordance with Olympism and its values.
    - The three main constituents of the Olympic Movement are the **IOC, the International Sports Federations ("IFs"), and the National Olympic Committees ("NOCs").**

Jahnavi Dangeti

Why in News?

Jahnavi Dangeti, a 23-year-old from Palakollu, West Godavari district, **Andhra Pradesh**, has been selected as an **Astronaut Candidate (ASCAN)** for the 2029 space mission of Titan Space Industries (TSI), a U.S.-based private space research agency.

- An Astronaut Candidate (ASCAN) is an individual who has been **selected by a space agency or organization** for astronaut training, with the goal of qualifying them for **spaceflight missions.**

Key Points

About Jahnavi Dangeti

- She completed her schooling in Godavari district, then pursued a Bachelor's in Electronics and Communication Engineering at Lovely Professional University (LPU) in Punjab, while her parents, Padmasri and Srinivas, reside in Kuwait.
- She became the **youngest foreign Analog Astronaut** and the **first Indian** at the **Analog Astronaut Training Centre (AATC)** in Kraków, Poland, in 2022.
- She has worked with the **International Astronomical Search Collaboration (IASC),** sponsored by **NASA**, and contributed to asteroid discovery using the **Pan-STARRS telescope in Hawaii.**
- Jahnavi has **received multiple awards**, including the People's Choice Award at the NASA Space Apps Challenge and the Young Achiever Award at **ISRO's** World Space Week celebrations.
- **Union Minister of Civil Aviation** congratulated her for becoming the first Indian to complete NASA's International Air & Space Programme, marking her achievement as a **proud moment for India.**

About Titans Space Mission

- The **mission, set for 2029**, will be led by Colonel (Retd.) William McArthur Jr., a veteran NASA astronaut.
- The US-based mission will take around five hours, during which time the crew will fly around the planet twice, experiencing **two sunrises and two sunsets.**
- The mission will yield close to three hours of **continuous zero gravity,** providing a revolutionary environment for scientific investigation and human spaceflight development.
- **Jahnavi** will begin astronaut training in 2026, which will include **flight simulations, spacecraft procedures,** survival training, and medical and psychological evaluations.

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Other Key Indian Space Milestones:

- **Axiom-4 (Ax-4) Mission (2025):** Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla became the second Indian to travel to space and will be the **first to visit** NASA's International Space Station (ISS).
  - The **four-member crew**(Peggy Whitson of the US, Slawosz Uznanski-Wisniewski from Poland, and Tibor Kapu from Hungary) will carry out 60 scientific experiments, including **seven contributed by India.**
  - ISRO's experiments aim to enhance our understanding of space, its biological effects, and **microgravity**, with one key experiment examining the **impact of spaceflight on six types of crop seeds.**
- **Russian Soyuz Mission (1984):** Rakesh Sharma became the first Indian to fly to space, marking a historic milestone for India's space journey.

CIP-South Asia Regional Centre (CSARC), Agra

Why in News?

The government has approved the establishment of the **South Asia regional center** of the **Peru-based International Potato Center (CIP)** in **Singna, Agra** district, Uttar Pradesh.

- The CIP regional centre in India will **cater to both domestic farmers** and those in other South Asian countries.

Key Points

- **Objective:** The primary objective of the project is to **enhance** food and nutrition security, increase farmers' income, and generate employment by **improving potato and sweet potato productivity**, post-harvest management, and value addition.
- **Project Cost:** The Uttar Pradesh government has allocated 10 hectares of land for the proposed centre.
  - The **total cost of the project is ₹171 crore**, with India contributing ₹111 crore and the CIP (International Potato Center) providing ₹60 crore.
- **Impact on Employment:** India's potato sector holds significant potential for job creation in areas such as **production, processing, packaging, transportation**, marketing, and the broader value chain.
- **Innovation:** The **CSARC (Central Potato and Sweet Potato Research Centre)** will develop high-yielding, nutrient-rich, and climate-resilient varieties of potatoes and sweet potatoes, which will accelerate sustainable development not only in India but also across South Asia through world-class scientific research and innovation.
- **India's Potato Production: India is the second-largest producer** and **consumer** of potatoes globally, with a production of 51.30 million tonnes in 2020.
  - Together, India and China account for more than one-third of the global potato production, which totaled 359.07 million tonnes in 2020.
- **Key Producing States in India: Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal lead potato production,** each contributing 15 million tonnes in 2020-21.
  - Bihar produces 9 million tonnes, with Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, and Punjab also being significant contributors.

Related Institutions

- **International Potato Center (CIP):** It was **founded in 1971,** is headquartered in Lima, Peru, and focuses on potato, sweet potato, and Andean roots and tubers.
  - **China** established the **China Center for Asia Pacific (CCCAP)** in Yanqing, Beijing, in 2017 to serve the **East Asia and Pacific region.**
- **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR):** The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) operates two institutions **focusing on tuber crops:** ICAR-CPRI (Central Potato Research Institute) in **Shimla,** which works on potatoes, and ICAR-CTCRI (Central Tuber Crops Research Institute) in **Thiruvananthapuram,** which focuses on sweet potatoes.
- **Other Agricultural Centre Establishment:** In 2017, the Ministry of Agriculture supported the establishment of a regional centre for the **Philippines-based International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in Varanasi**, India.

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25th Central Zonal Council Meeting in Varanasi

Why in News?

The Union Home Minister and **Minister of Cooperation** chaired the 25th Central **Zonal Council** meeting in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

- It was organized by the **Inter-State Council Secretariat** in collaboration with the Uttar Pradesh Government.

Key Points

Key Highlights of the Meeting:

- A resolution praising the Prime Minister's strong willpower and the **Indian Armed Forces' bravery** was unanimously approved by the Central Zonal Council.
- The Home Minister highlighted that the Central Zonal Council is the only zonal council where **no issue or dispute exists** between member states, and this is a significant achievement.
- **Between 2004 and 2014,** only 11 Zonal Council meetings and 14 Standing Committee meetings were held, while between 2014 and 2025, 28 Zonal Council meetings and 33 Standing Committee meetings took place, **marking a twofold increase.**
  - A total of 1,287 issues have been resolved in these meetings, reflecting a historic and encouraging achievement.
- A total of 19 issues were discussed including the implementation of **Fast Track Special Courts (FTSCs)** for the speedy investigation and prompt **disposal of rape cases** against women and children, provision of **brick-and-mortar banking facilities** within the designated radius of every village, and implementation of the **Emergency Response Support System (ERSS-112)**, among other key issues.
  - The Home Minister stressed that all states of the Zonal Council should ensure the **eradication of child malnutrition,** bring the dropout ratio down to zero, and strengthen the **cooperative sector.**
  - The Union Home Minister also urged member states to **boost Gram Panchayat revenues** and create rules to strengthen **India's three-tier Panchayati Raj system.**

Zonal Councils

- **About:** Zonal Councils are statutory bodies established under the **States Reorganisation Act, 1956**, as a high-level advisory forum to foster cooperative working among states and to create a healthy inter-State and Centre–State environment.
  - The idea of Zonal Councils was first proposed by former Prime Minister **Jawaharlal Nehru** in 1956 during debates on the **States Reorganisation Commission's (Fazal Ali Commission, 1953) Report**.
  - Under Sections 15 to 22 of the States Reorganisation Act, 1956, five Zonal Councils were established.
  - The **seven North Eastern States are not included in the Zonal Councils** and their special problems are looked after by the North Eastern Council, set up under the **North Eastern Council Act, 1972.**
    - The State of Sikkim has also been included in the North Eastern Council vide **North Eastern Council (Amendment) Act, 2002.**
- **Composition:**

Zonal Council	States
Central Zonal Council	Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand
Northern Zonal Council	Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Rajasthan, Delhi, Chandigarh
Eastern Zonal Council	Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Sikkim
Western Zonal Council	Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, and Daman & Diu
Southern Zonal Council	Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry

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- **Organizational Structure:**
  - **Chairman:** Union Home Minister (for all 5 Zonal Councils). He is also the ex-officio Chairman of the North Eastern Council (NEC).
  - **Vice-Chairman:** Chief Minister of one of the member states (by annual rotation).
  - **Members:** The members include the **Chief Ministers,** Lieutenant Governors, or Administrators of the member States and Union Territories.
    - Additionally, from each member state, the **Governor** nominates two ministers as members of the Council.
  - **Advisors:** One nominee from **NITI Aayog** (earlier Planning Commission), Chief Secretaries, and Development Commissioners of the member states.
    - Each Zonal Council has a **Permanent Committee** comprising the Chief Secretaries of member states. State-proposed issues are first discussed by this committee, and unresolved matters are then placed before the full Zonal Council for further deliberation.
- **Objectives:**
  - Bringing out national integration;
  - Arresting the **growth of acute State consciousness,** regionalism, linguism, and particularistic tendencies;
  - Enabling the Centre and the States to co-operate and exchange ideas and experiences;
  - Establishing a climate of co-operation amongst the States for the successful and speedy execution of development projects.
- **Functions:** Each Zonal Council is an **advisory body** and may discuss and make recommendations about-
  - any matter of common interest in the field of **economic and social planning;**
  - any matter concerning **border disputes, linguistic minorities,** or inter-State transport;
  - any matter connected with or arising out of the reorganization of the States under the States Reorganisation Act, 1956.

Gharial Hatchlings Thrive in Chambal River

Why in News?

The **National Chambal Sanctuary** has seen 1,186 gharial hatchlings born in the Etawah range and 840 in the Bah range, and now they are all frolicking in the **Chambal River.**

- Gharial eggs incubate for 50 to 60 days, with hatchlings emerging in early June and the hatching phase lasting about a month.

Key Points

Gharials:

- **About:** The **gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*)** is distinct from other crocodilians due to its long snout.
  - **Crocodiles** are the largest surviving reptiles, primarily inhabiting freshwater swamps, lakes, and rivers, with one saltwater species.
    - They are **nocturnal and poikilothermic** (also known as ectotherms or cold-blooded animals, are characterized by their body temperature fluctuating with the surrounding environment).
- **Distribution:** According to the **Wildlife Institute of India**, gharials were widely distributed in the Brahmaputra, **Ganga,** **Indus,** and the Mahanadi-Brahmani-Baitarani river systems of India, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan.
  - Currently, their major populations occur in three **tributaries of the Ganga** (the Chambal and Girwa in India, and the Rapti-Narayani river in Nepal).
  - Odisha is the only Indian state to host wild populations of **all three native crocodilian species** (Gharial (*Gavialis gangeticus*), Mugger crocodile (*Crocodylus palustris*), and Saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*)).
- **Population:** India hosts nearly 80% of the global wild gharial population, with around 3,000 individuals across sites like **National Chambal Sanctuary,** Katarnia Ghat, and Son Gharial Sanctuary.

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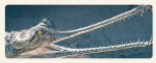
- **Crocodile Conservation Project:** India launched its CCP at Odisha's Bhitarkanika National Park with support from the United Nations Development Programme and the Food and Agriculture Organisation.
  - It adopted the "rear and release" method, created protected habitats like Bhitarkanika and Satkosia Tiger Reserve, and promoted captive breeding and community awareness, making it a national model for crocodilian conservation.
  - On World Crocodile Day (17th June), India commemorates 50 years of its Crocodile Conservation Project (CCP) (1975–2025).

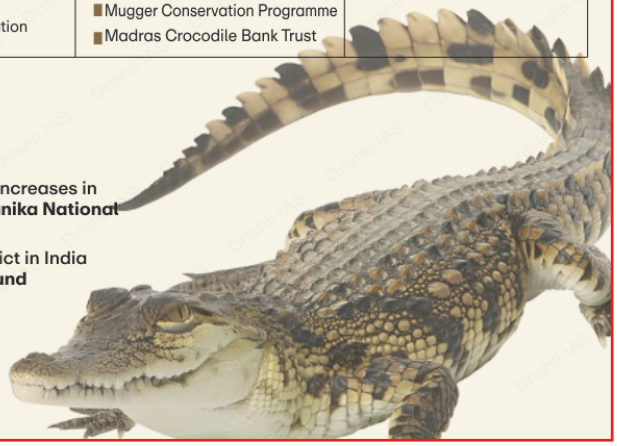
CROCODILE SPECIES IN INDIA

India harbours three diverse crocodile species—Mugger, Saltwater, and Gharial-found in distinct habitats nationwide.

Aspects	Gharial	Mugger/Indian Crocodile	Saltwater Crocodile
Scientific Name	*Gavialis Gangeticus* 	*Crocodylus Palustris*	*Crocodylus Porosus*
Distribution: India	**Viable Population:** National Chambal Sanctuary (U.P, Raj, M.P) **Small Non-Breeding Population:** Son, Gandak, Hooghly, Ghagra & Satkosia WLS (Odisha)	Throughout India	East Coast (Odisha's Bhitarkarnika WLS, Andaman & Nicobar Islands coast & Sundarbans)
Distribution: Neigh bourhood	Brahmaputra of Bhutan & Bangladesh& Irrawaddy River	Extinct in Bhutan and Myanmar	Across Southeast Asia
Special Feature	Longest of all Crocodile, Long and thin Snout	Egg-laying, Hole-nesting, Wide & U-shaped Snout	Largest living reptile, Pointed & V-shaped Snout
Habitat	Freshwater	Freshwater	Saltwater, Brackish & Wetlands
IUCN Status	CR	VU	LC
CITES Status	Appendix I	Appendix I	Appendix I
CMS Status	Appendix I	-	Appendix II
WPA,1972 Status	Schedule I	Schedule I	Schedule I
Threats	Dams, Pollution, Sand mining	Habitat Destruction	Hunted for its skin and Habitat loss
Government Initiatives	▪ Odisha: Rs. 1000 award to conserve Gharial in Mahanadi River Basin ▪ Indian Crocodile Conservation Project,1975	▪ Indian Crocodile Conservation Project,1975 ▪ Mugger Conservation Programme ▪ Madras Crocodile Bank Trust	Indian Crocodile Conservation Project,1975

MISCELLANEOUS FACTS

- **17th June:** World Crocodile Day
- **Annual Reptile Census, 2023:** Marginal Increases in number of saltwater crocodiles **(Bhitarkanika National Park and its nearby areas)**
- **Odisha's Kendrapara District:** Only district in India where **all three species of crocodiles found**



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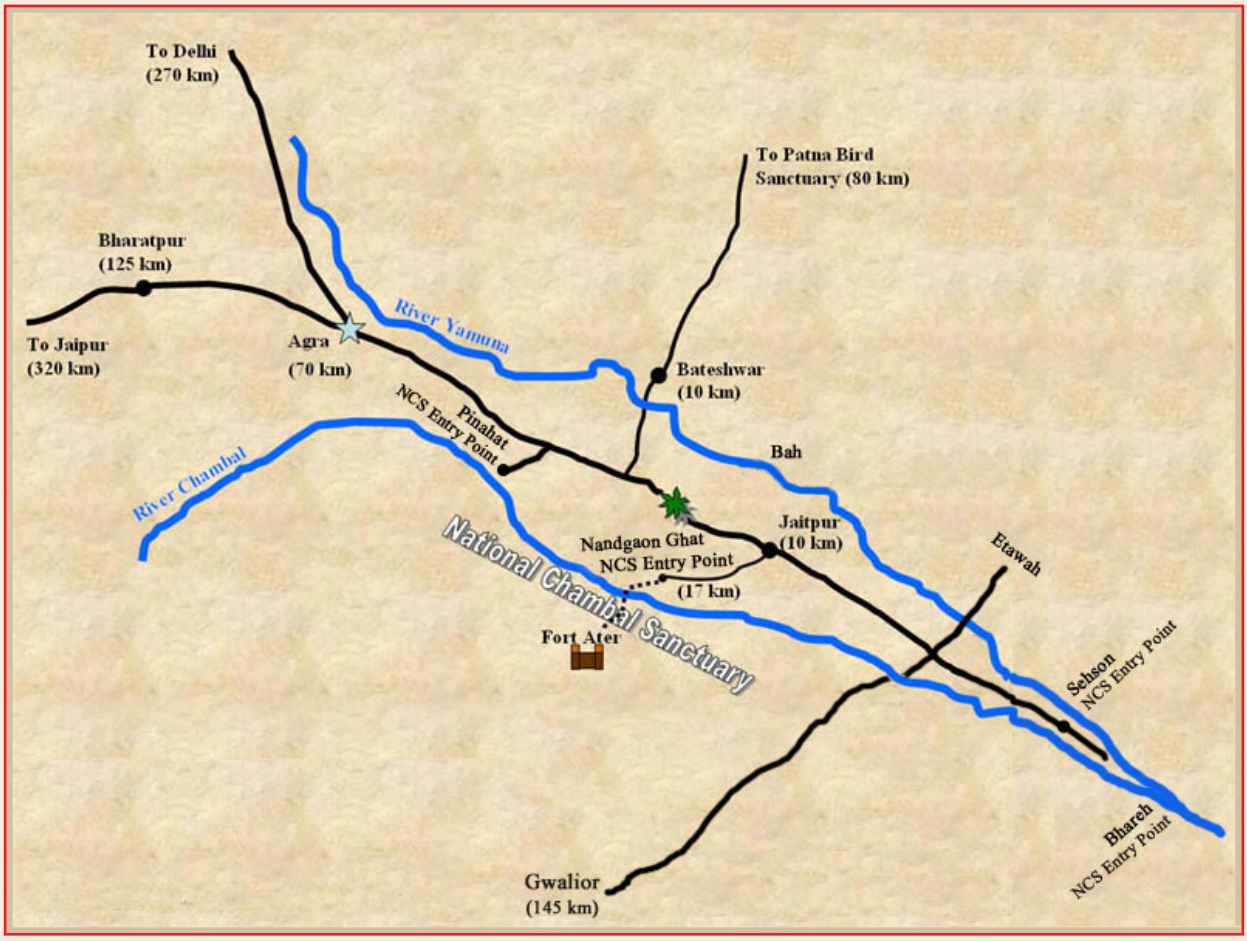
National Chambal Sanctuary

- It was set up in 1979 as a riverine sanctuary along an approximately 425 km length of the Chambal River.
- Its ravines stretch over 2-6 km wide along the **Chambal River** near the tri-point of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh.
- The National Chambal Sanctuary is listed as an Important Bird Area (IBA) and is a proposed **Ramsar site.**



UP to Set Up Four Modern Rescue Centres

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government is establishing **four modern rescue centres** to manage the increasing encounters between **people and large carnivores.**

Key Points

About Rescue Centres

- The **forest and wildlife department** is establishing **four modern rescue centres** to address and **reduce human-wildlife conflicts,** especially involving large carnivores like **tigers**, **leopards**, **and jackals.**

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- These rescue centres will be **strategically located across key regions:** Western UP, Terai, Awadh, and Bundelkhand, to provide safe shelter for wild animals that stray into human settlements.
- The specific locations for these centres include **Hastinapur Wildlife Sanctuary** (Meerut), **Pilibhit Tiger Reserve**, **Sohagibarwa Wildlife Sanctuary** (Maharajganj), and **Ranipur Wildlife Sanctuary** (Chitrakoot).
- The state government has allocated Rs 57.2 crore for the establishment of these rescue centres, emphasizing the importance of the initiative.

Human-Animal Conflict

- **Definitions:** **Human-animal conflict** refers to situations where human activities, such as agriculture, infrastructure development, or resource extraction, **come into conflict with wild animals,** leading to negative outcomes for both humans and animals.

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- **Implications:**
  - **Economic Losses:** Human-animal conflict leads to **financial hardships** for farmers and herders due to crop destruction, infrastructure damage, and livestock loss.
  - **Safety Risks:** Wild animals, especially predators like tigers and lions, pose serious threats to human safety, with the potential for injury or death.
  - **Ecological Imbalances:** Killing predators **disrupts ecosystems** by causing prey population surges, leading to environmental harm.
  - **Conservation Challenges:** Negative perceptions from human-animal conflict **hinder conservation efforts** and the implementation of protective measures for wildlife.
  - **Psychological Impact:** The conflict causes fear, anxiety, and trauma, especially among individuals directly affected by animal attacks or property damage.
- **Government Measures to Tackle Human-Animal Conflict:**
  - **The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972:** The Act establishes **legal provisions** for hunting prohibition, wildlife habitat protection, and the creation of protected areas.
  - **The Biological Diversity Act, 2002:** India, as a signatory to the **UN Convention on Biological Diversity,** ensures that the Act aligns with existing forest and wildlife laws.
  - **National Wildlife Action Plan (2002-2016):** The Plan emphasizes enhancing protected areas, **conserving endangered species,** controlling wildlife trade, and promoting research and education.
  - **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA):** NDMA provides **guidelines for integrating disaster prevention** and mitigation into development plans and projects across Ministries and Departments.

Lucknow's Bid for UNESCO City Of Gastronomy

Why in News?

Famous for its culture, cuisine, and heritage, **Lucknow** has **officially submitted its nomination** to **UNESCO's Creative Cities Network** under the **"City of Gastronomy" category.**

Note: Currently, **Hyderabad is the only city in India to hold the title of "City of Gastronomy"** under the UCCN.

Key Points

- **UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN):**
  - It was **created in 2004** to promote cooperation with and among cities that have identified creativity as a strategic factor for sustainable urban development.
    - **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 11** aims to make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.
  - The **network covers seven creative fields:** crafts and folk arts, media arts, film, design, gastronomy, literature and music.
  - In the **gastronomy sector, member cities include** Alba (Italy), Arequipa (Peru), Bergen (Norway), Belem (Brazil), Bendigo (Australia).
- **Indian Cities in the UCCN (as of 2023):**
  - A total of 10 Indian cities are part of the UCCN across different creative fields: **Kozhikode** (Literature), **Gwalior** (Music), **Jaipur** (Crafts and Folk Arts), **Varanasi** (Music), **Chennai** (Music), **Mumbai** (Film), **Hyderabad** (Gastronomy), **Srinagar** (Crafts and Folk Arts).

ISRO Tests Model Rocket in UP

Why in News?

The **Astronautical Society of India (ASI)**, in collaboration with **InSPACe (Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre)** and **Indian Space**

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Research Organisation (ISRO), successfully conducted rocket launch trials in preparation for a student model rocketry competition set for October 2025.

Key Points

- **Astronautical Society of India (ASI):** The **ASI** was **established in 1990** to promote the growth and development of astronautics in India.
  - It actively supports the interests of developing countries in astronautics through its role in the **International Astronautical Federation (IAF), Paris**, where it serves as a voting member.
- **Student Model Rocketry Competition:** The upcoming IN-SPACe CANSAT and Model Rocketry India Student Competition 2024–25 in Kushinagar offers undergraduates hands-on experience in designing, building, and launching **CANSATs** and model rockets to explore space technology.
  - CANSATs are **miniature satellites that fit inside a soft drink can.** These payloads are launched to a few hundred meters using sounding rockets and descend with parachutes.

Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe)

- **About:** IN-SPACe is a single-window, independent, nodal agency that functions as an autonomous agency in the Department of Space (DOS).
  - It was formed following the space sector reforms in 2020 to enable and facilitate the participation of private players.
- **Key Functions:** IN-SPACe promotes, authorizes, and supervises space activities of non-governmental entities, including building launch vehicles, providing space services, sharing ISRO's infrastructure, and establishing new space facilities.
  - IN-SPACe serves as the interface between ISRO and NGEs, helping streamline private sector engagement in space missions.

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)

- **About:** ISRO, headquartered in Bengaluru, Karnataka, operates under the Department of Space, is India's national space agency focused on advancing space science and technology for national and global benefit.
- **Historical Background:** ISRO **evolved from the Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR), established in 1962** under the vision of **Dr. Vikram Sarabhai.**
  - In **1969, ISRO was formally created**, replacing INCOSPAR and expanding its role in space technology. In 1972, the Department of Space was set up, and ISRO was brought under its administrative control.
- **Core Objectives:** ISRO/DoS aims to develop and apply space technology to meet various national needs, including:
  - Communication and broadcasting
  - Meteorological services
  - Resource monitoring and management
  - Navigation and positioning systems
- **Major Achievements:** ISRO has built key space systems in India for **television, weather forecasting,** and **satellite-based resource mapping.**
  - It has developed indigenous launch vehicles like the **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)** and **Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV)** to place satellites into desired orbits.

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ISRO LAUNCH VEHICLES

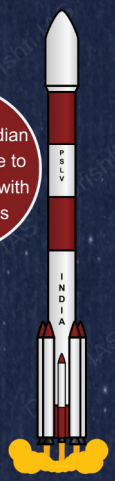
BACKGROUND

- First rocket developed by ISRO - SLV (Satellite Launch Vehicle)
- Successor of SLV - Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle (ASLV)

Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)

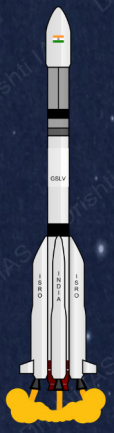
- About
  - The Workhorse of ISRO
  - 3rd gen, 4-Staged launch vehicle (1st, 3rd stages - solid fuel; 2nd, 4th stages - liquid fuel)
- Capacity
  - Delivers earth-observation/remote-sensing satellites
  - Used to launch satellites of lower mass (~1400 Kg)
- 4 Variants:
  - PSLV-CA
  - PSLV-QL
  - PSLV-DL
  - PSLV-XL
- Launches Satellites in
  - Low inclination LEO
  - Sub-GTO
  - GTO
- Important Launches
  - First successful launch - October 1994
  - Chandrayaan-1 (2008)
  - Mars Orbiter Spacecraft (2013)

PSLV is 1st Indian launch vehicle to be equipped with liquid stages



Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV)

- About
  - 4th Gen, 3-staged launched vehicle
  - Much more powerful rocket, carries satellites much deeper into space
  - Has an indigenous Cryogenic Upper Stage
- Capacity
  - Delivers communication-satellites
  - Carries heavier satellites (~2200 kg to GTO)
  - Carries 10,000-kg satellites to LEO
- Launches Satellites in
  - Primarily Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO) (~36000 Km altitude)
- Important Launches:
  - Chandrayaan-2
  - Upcoming Gaganyaan



Launch Vehicle Mark-III

- About
  - Aka GSLV Mk-III
  - 3-stage launch vehicle (2 solid propellant and 1 core stage comprising liquid and cryogenic stages)
- Capacity
  - 4,000-kg of satellites into GTO
  - 8,000 kg of payloads into LEO
- Launches Satellites in
  - GTO
  - LEO
  - Medium Earth orbit (MEO)
  - Missions to moon, sun

Mk-III versions have made ISRO entirely self-sufficient in launching its satellites

Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)

- About
  - Developed specifically for small and micro-satellites
- Capacity
  - Satellites up to 500 kg
- Launch Limit
  - 500 km planar orbit (LEO) from Satish Dhawan Space Centre

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ULBs to Get Funds From State Sector Scheme

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has empowered **urban local bodies (ULBs)**, including nagar nigams, nagar palikas, and nagar panchayats, to directly **execute infrastructure projects worth up to Rs 10 crore** without seeking approval from the urban development department.

- This move aims to **address financial constraints** and enable ULBs to meet the infrastructure needs of their communities, particularly for **public-interest projects.**

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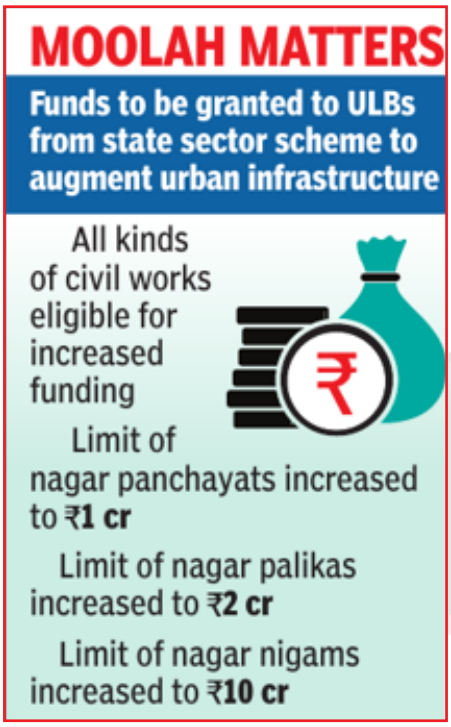
Key Points:

- **Expanded Scope of Infrastructure Works:**
  - Initially, the urban development department permitted ULBs to handle drainage works with increased spending limits. This flexibility has now been **expanded to include a wide range of civil works.**



- **The types of works now allowed under this scheme include:**
  - Construction or **extension of sewerage lines,** sewerage treatment plants, pumping stations, and water supply systems.
  - Installation of water meters, tube wells, overhead tanks, and rainwater harvesting systems.
  - Water recycling and water treatment infrastructure.
- **Additional Permissible Works:** ULBs are also authorized to undertake the following projects:
  - Desilting of water bodies.
  - Construction of retaining walls.
  - Tree plantation initiatives.
  - Installation of solar lights.
- **Funding Mechanism:**
  - These projects can be financed through the **increased budgetary allocations** available to ULBs, as well as provisions under the state sector scheme for program implementation. This ensures that funds are **readily accessible** to carry out the infrastructure work.

Uttar Pradesh Government Highlights Growing Shift Towards Maize Cultivation

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has highlighted the **growing shift towards** maize cultivation among progressive farmers, attributing this trend to the **crop's economic benefits, minimal water requirements,** and high nutritional value.

Key Points:

- **Key Facts About Maize:**
  - It requires **less water** and offers significant nutritional benefits, making it a sustainable option for many.
  - The ideal sowing window for maize is from 15 June to 15 July. If irrigation is available, **sowing can begin in late May**, allowing for early growth before the onset of heavy rains.
  - With the **adoption of** modern farming techniques, maize yields can potentially reach up to 100 quintals per hectare.
  - **Currently, Tamil Nadu leads with an average yield** of 59.39 quintals per hectare, while **Uttar Pradesh has a lower average** of 21.63 quintals per hectare, indicating ample room for growth.
    - A significant shift towards maize farming is being observed in **Barabanki,** traditionally known for **mentha cultivation.**
  - Maize is considered the **"Queen of Grains"** due to its rich nutritional content, including carbohydrates, proteins, vitamins, and minerals.
    - Maize is gaining attention for its multiple uses, such as in the production of sweet corn, baby corn, biofuels, **and** bioplastics**.**

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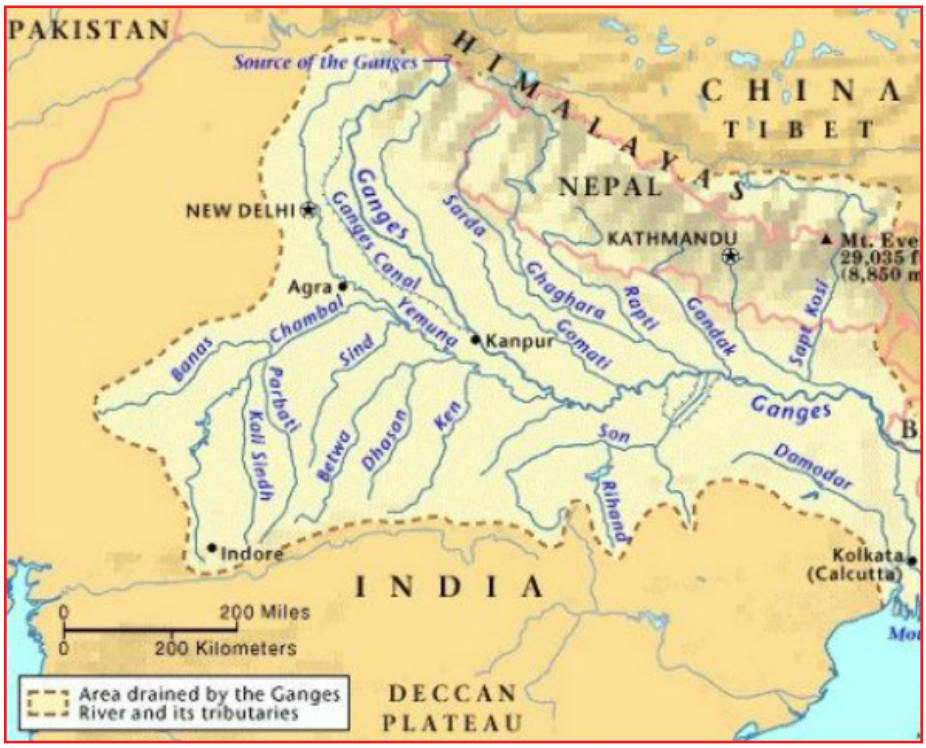
- **Government Support for Farmers:** The state government has introduced initiatives like the Quick Maize Development Programme and assured Minimum Support Prices (MSP).
  - For the 2024-25 season, the MSP for maize is set at Rs 2,225 per quintal.
  - Procurement began on 15 June and will continue until 31 July across several districts.
- **Target for Maize Production by 2027:** The state government has set an ambitious target to **double maize production** by 2027.

Sharda River

Why in News?

Several people drowned after being caught in the strong currents of the Sharda River near Devraghat in the Sitapur district.



Key Points

- **About the Sharda River:**
  - **Origin and Course:**
    - The Sharda River, also known as the **Kali River** in its upper reaches, **originates in Uttarakhand.**
    - It rises in the Great Himalayas, on the eastern slopes of the **Nanda Devi massif.**
    - Flowing generally south-southwest, the **river forms the boundary between Uttarakhand (India) and western Nepal.**
    - After descending from the mountains, it enters the Indo-Gangetic Plain at Barmdeo Mandi in Nepal.
- As the river widens above the Sarda Barrage, it is **referred to as the Sarda River**.
  - After crossing into India, the Sarda River flows southeastward through northern Uttar Pradesh.
  - It eventually **joins the Ghaghara River southwest of Bahraich**, covering a total length of approximately 480 km (300 miles).
  - **Major Tributaries:**
    - Key tributaries of the Sharda River are **Dhauliganga River, Goriganga River, Sarju River.**
  - **Sarda Barrage and Canal System:**
    - The Sarda Barrage, **located near Banbasa in Uttarakhand**, plays a significant role in irrigation.
    - It serves as the **origin of the Sarda Canal, completed in 1930,** which is one of northern India's longest irrigation canals.

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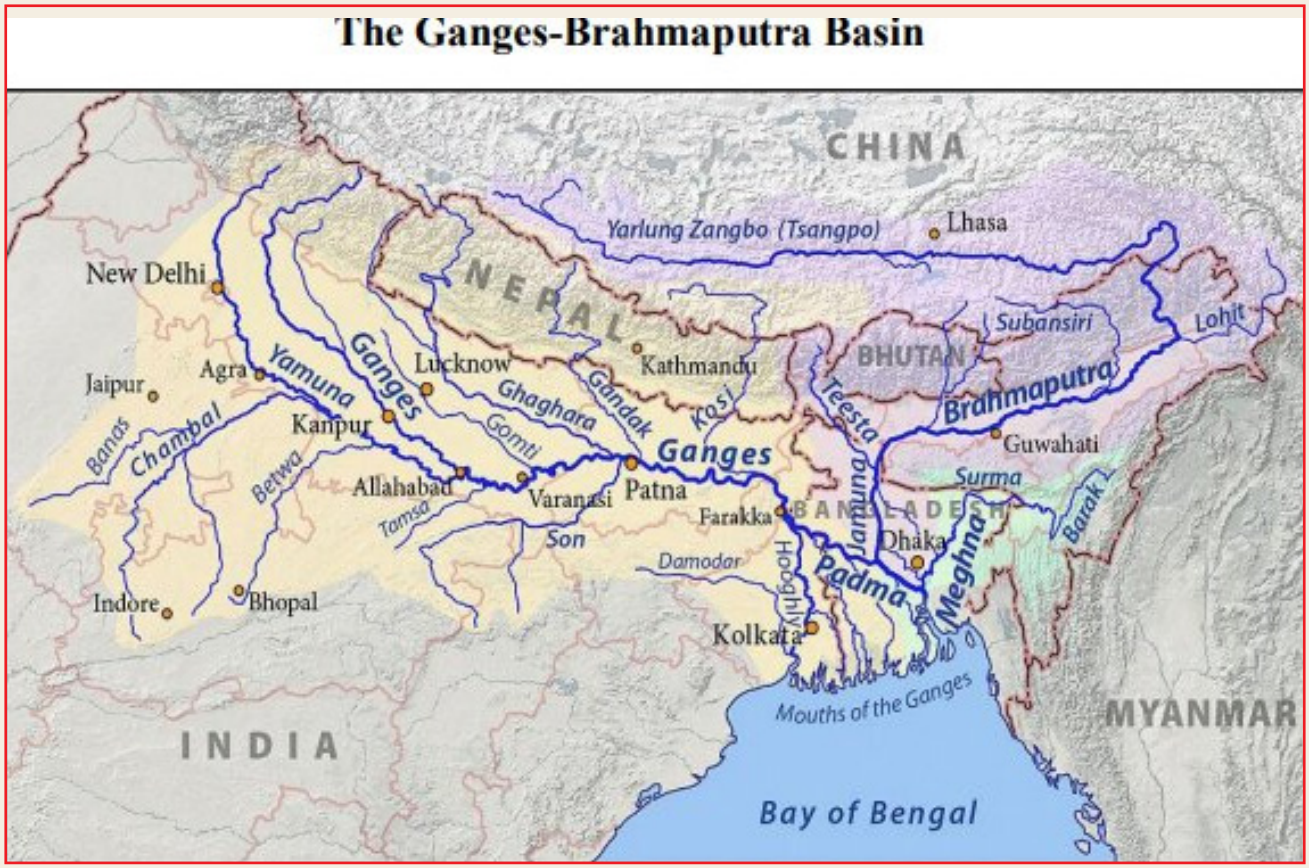
Ghaghara River



- **Origin and Upper Course:**
  - The Ghaghara River is a **major left-bank tributary of the Ganges River.**
  - It **originates as the Karnali River** in the high Himalayas of the southern **Tibet Autonomous Region in China.**
  - Flowing southeast through Nepal, it descends from the mountains and cuts across the **Siwalik Range.**
- **Formation of the River:**
  - After crossing the Siwalik Range, the river splits into two branches.
  - These branches reunite south of the India-Nepal border, forming what is known as the Ghaghara River.
- **Key Tributaries:**
  - **Major tributaries** that join the Ghaghara from the north include **Kuwana River, Rapti River, Little Gandak River.**
  - These tributaries contribute significantly to the river's volume and have helped shape the extensive **alluvial plains of northern Uttar Pradesh.**
    - In its lower reaches, the Ghaghara is **also known by other names Sarju River, Deoha.**
    - It was referred to as Sarabos by the **2nd-century Greek geographer Ptolemy.**

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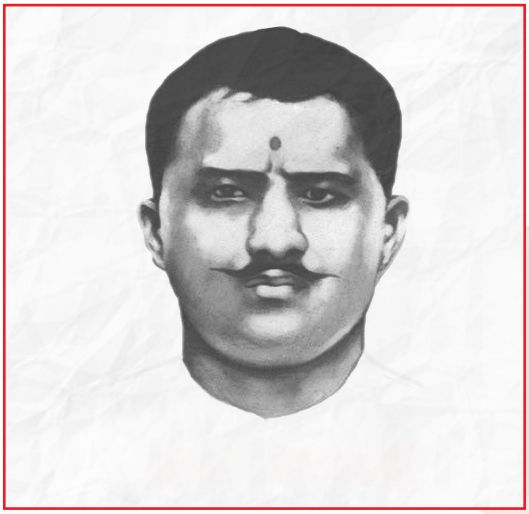
Birth Anniversary Of Ram Prasad Bismil

Why in News?

On 11th June 2025, the **birth anniversary of freedom fighter** Ram Prasad Bismil was commemorated. Renowned for his revolutionary spirit and poetic brilliance, he played a pivotal role in **India's struggle against** British colonial rule.



Key Points

- **Birth and Early Life:**
  - Ram Prasad Bismil was born on **11th June 1897** in **Shahjahanpur district of Uttar Pradesh**.
- **Early Influences and Ideology:**
  - Bismil joined **the Arya Samaj, founded by** Dayanand Saraswati **in 1875,** and began writing under pen names like 'Bismil', meaning 'wounded' or 'restless'.
  - He embraced revolutionary ideals after reading about the death sentence awarded to Bhai Parmanand, an Arya Samaj missionary and nationalist.
  - At the age of 18, he expressed his anguish through the powerful poem **'Mera Janm'**.
  - He **supported armed revolution**, believing it to be a **more effective path to independence** than Gandhi's non-violent approach.
- **Major Contributions:**
  - **Mainpuri Conspiracy:**
    - Disillusioned with the Congress's moderate stance, Bismil **founded a revolutionary group** named **Matrivedi.**
    - He was involved in the **Mainpuri Conspiracy of 1918**, wherein the police found a few young people, including Bismil selling books that were prescribed by the government.
    - He and his associates carried out three successful raids to loot government funds to support their cause.
  - **Formation of Hindustan Republican Association (HRA):**
    - In 1924, Bismil **co-founded the** Hindustan Republican Association (HRA) with **Sachindra Nath Sanyal, Ashfaqulla Khan, Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee and Jadugopal Mukherjee.**
    - He drafted most of HRA's manifesto, envisioning a federal "United States of India" established through armed revolution.
  - **Kakori Train Action:**
    - In 1925, Bismil, along with **Chandrasekhar Azad and Ashfaqulla Khan**, led the Kakori train robbery to fund revolutionary activities.
    - They successfully looted the train near Kakori, but British authorities arrested them within a month.
    - After an 18-month-long trial, Bismil, Ashfaqulla Khan, Rajendra Lahiri, and Roshan Singh were **sentenced to death under the Kakori Conspiracy Case.**
- **Literary Contributions:**
  - Bismil **wrote stirring patriotic poetry in Hindi and Urdu** that inspired countless Indians to join the freedom struggle.
    - Bismil's poem ***'Sarfroshi Ki Tammana, Ab hamare Dil Me hai'*** became a clarion call for the Indian Freedom movement.
  - His works reflected deep concerns for social justice, human dignity, and equality.

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- **Martyrdom:**
  - The British **executed** Bismil **on 19th December 1927** at **Gorakhpur Jail.**

Note: In August 2025, the Uttar Pradesh government renamed **'Kakori Kand' to 'Kakori Train Action',** stating that the word **'Kand' (meaning 'incident' or 'scandal')** carries a negative connotation and undermines the significance of this historic act in India's freedom struggle.

Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0 Campaign

Why in News?

As part of the **'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0'** campaign, the **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)** launched a **tree plantation drive** to plant 40,000 trees along the **Delhi–Dehradun Corridor** in Baghpat, Uttar Pradesh.

Key Points

- **Nationwide Impact of 'Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0':**
  - As part of the '**Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam 2.0' initiative**, NHAI has already planted over 5.12 lakh trees along National Highways across India.
  - The **second phase** was **launched by the Prime Minister** on **World Environment Day, 5th June, 2025.**
    - It aims to **honor mothers by encouraging tree planting in their names**, combining environmental conservation with a tribute to motherhood, symbolizing how mothers, like trees, nurture and sustain life.
  - **The campaign envisions:**
    - Complete saturation of tree plantations along highways
    - Involvement of multiple stakeholders including government bodies, local authorities, and communities
    - Creation of a green, resilient, and sustainable National Highway network

- **National Highways Authority of India (NHAI):**
  - **About:** NHAI was set up under the **NHAI Act, 1988** under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH).**
  - **Objective:** It has been entrusted with the **National Highways Development Project (NHDP)**, along with other minor projects **for development, maintenance and management.**
    - NHDP, started in 1998, is a **project** to upgrade, rehabilitate and widen major **highways** in India to a higher standard.
    - **Vision:** To meet the nation's need for the provision and **maintenance of the National Highways network to global standards** and to **meet the user's expectations** in the most time-bound and cost-effective manner and **promote economic well-being** and quality of life of the people.

50 Years Of National Emergency

Why in News?

50 years ago, on **12th June 1975**, the **Allahabad High Court** invalidated **Indira Gandhi's 1971 election** in the ***Indira Nehru Gandhi v. Shri Raj Narain Case, 1975*** leading to the declaration of a **National Emergency (NE)** on **25th June 1975** that continued till **March 1977.**

Key Points

- **Indira Nehru Gandhi v. Shri Raj Narain Case, 1975:**
  - **About:** It is a landmark in India's **constitutional and democratic history**, arising from the **1971 general elections**, where **Prime Minister Indira Gandhi** defeated **socialist leader Raj Narain**, leading to a legal challenge on grounds of **electoral malpractices.**
  - **Electoral Context and Allegations: Raj Narain** alleged that **Indira Gandhi** misused **government machinery** and **public funds** for electoral gain, violating the **Representation of**

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the People Act, 1951, and filed a **petition** in the Allahabad High Court seeking to **invalidate her election** on grounds of these alleged **malpractices.**

- **Allahabad High Court Verdict:** The court found **Indira Gandhi guilty** of **misusing government machinery** for **election campaigning.**
  - As a result, her **election was invalidated** and she was **disqualified from holding Prime Ministerial office**.
- **Appeal in Supreme Court:** Indira Gandhi **appealed** the **High Court's decision** in the **Supreme Court**, seeking both a **stay on the High Court's order** and an **opportunity to contest its findings.**
- **Declaration of Emergency:** Amidst **political turmoil**, on **25th June 1975**, **Indira Gandhi's government declared a National Emergency**, leading to the **suspension of civil liberties**, **press censorship**, and **postponement of elections.**

Key Facts About National Emergency:

- **About National Emergency:** NE is proclaimed by the **President** under **Article 352** when the **security of India or a part of it** is threatened by **War, External Aggression (external emergency), or Armed Rebellion (internal emergency).**
  - The **38th Amendment Act, 1975** allowed the President to issue Emergency proclamations on grounds of **war**, **external aggression**, **armed rebellion**, or **imminent danger thereof**, while the **44th Amendment Act, 1978** replaced **"internal disturbance"** with **"armed rebellion"**.
- **Territorial Extent:** NE can extend to the **whole of the country or only a part of it**. **42nd Amendment Act, 1976** enabled the President to limit the operation of NE to a **specific part of India.**
- **Parliamentary Approval:** As per the **44th Amendment Act**, 1978, **NE** must be approved by **both Houses within one month** by a **special majority** (originally two months).
  - If the **Lok Sabha is dissolved** at the time of declaration, the **Rajya Sabha's approval** remains valid, but the **reconstituted Lok Sabha** must approve it within **30 days of its first sitting.**
- **Duration:** It continues for **6 months**, and can be **extended to an indefinite period** with **approval of Parliament** for **every 6 months** (44th Amendment Act 1978).
- **Revocation:** It can be **revoked anytime by the president** without the requirement of approval by Parliament.
  - The **Lok Sabha** can pass a **resolution to disapprove the continuation** of a **National Emergency**. If **one-tenth of its total members** submit a **written notice** to the **Speaker** (if in session) or to the **President** (if not in session), a **special sitting** must be held within **14 days**. The resolution must be passed by a **simple majority.**
- **Judicial Review:** The **38th Amendment Act, 1975** made the **Emergency declaration immune to judicial review**. This was later **reversed by the 44th Amendment Act, 1978**.
  - In the **Minerva Mills case, 1980**, the Supreme Court held that a **Proclamation of NE can be challenged** if it is **mala fide**, based on **irrelevant or extraneous facts**, or is **absurd or perverse.**

Dudhwa Tiger Reserve Boasts Butterfly Diversity

Why in News?

Known for its large **tiger population**, the **Dudhwa Tiger Reserve (DTR)**, Uttar Pradesh, now boasts **180 species of butterflies**, signaling a healthier ecosystem and enhanced conservation efforts.

Key Points

Rise in Butterfly Species:

- A recent survey by the **University of Lucknow** recorded over 110 butterfly species in DTR, up from the earlier known count of just 45.

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- **Migratory and Rare Species:**
  - **Migratory butterflies from Uttarakhand** contribute to the growing diversity in Uttar Pradesh.
  - Rare and notable species identified include **Common Mormon,** Common Mine, Common Lime, Tawny Coaster, Gaudy Baron (rare), Striped Tiger, Common Tiger (both sexes), Grey Count (rare), Commander.
- **Significance:**
  - Butterflies, known as **bio-indicators**, are highly sensitive to climate change and thrive only in ecologically sound environments.
  - This sharp increase **signals a healthier and more balanced ecosystem**.

- **About Dudhwa Tiger Reserve (DTR):**
  - **Background:**
    - Conservationist Billy Arjan Singh played a key role in securing the **National Park status for Dudhwa in 1977.**
    - It was later designated a **Tiger Reserve in 1987.**
  - **Composition:**
    - **The Dudhwa Tiger Reserve (DTR) includes:**
      - Dudhwa National Park
      - Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary
      - Katerniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary
    - Buffer zones from North Kheri, South Kheri, and Shahjahanpur forest divisions.
  - **Flora and Fauna:**
    - The region represents a **Tarai-Bhabar ecosystem** of the **Upper Gangetic plains.**
    - The vegetation is primarily North Indian **Moist Deciduous Forest.**
    - The reserve is known for its rich biodiversity, home to a wide variety of flora and fauna including the **Bengal tiger, Indian rhinoceros, swamp deer, leopard and several species of birds.**
  - **Biodiversity and Conservation Status:**
    - Dudhwa National Park, covering an area of 490.3 sq km, is **home to 135 tigers, out of a total of 205 tigers in Uttar Pradesh**, marking a significant increase from 82 tigers in 2018.
    - In the **2022 All-India Tiger Census,** Dudhwa Tiger Reserve (DTR) was **ranked fourth in India** for its tiger population.

Note:

- In 2015, **Maharashtra became the first state in India to designate the "Blue Mormon"** (*Papilio polymnestor*) as its **state butterfly**.
- This butterfly is the **second largest in India**, only behind the Southern Birdwing.

Namami Gange Mission

Why in News?

On **World Environment Day 2025 (5th June, 2025)**, a special event under the **Namami Gange Mission** was held in **Bulandshahr, Uttar Pradesh**, focusing on **ecological restoration, sustainable practices**, and modern technology for river conservation.

Note: The **Ganga rejuvenation programme** was recognised as one of the world's top 10 ecosystem restoration initiatives at the **UN Biodiversity Conference in Montreal.**

Key Points

- **Key Highlights of the Event:**
  - **Sewage and Pollution Control Measures:**
    - **Sewage Treatment Plants** across the Ganga basin are preventing untreated wastewater from entering the river.

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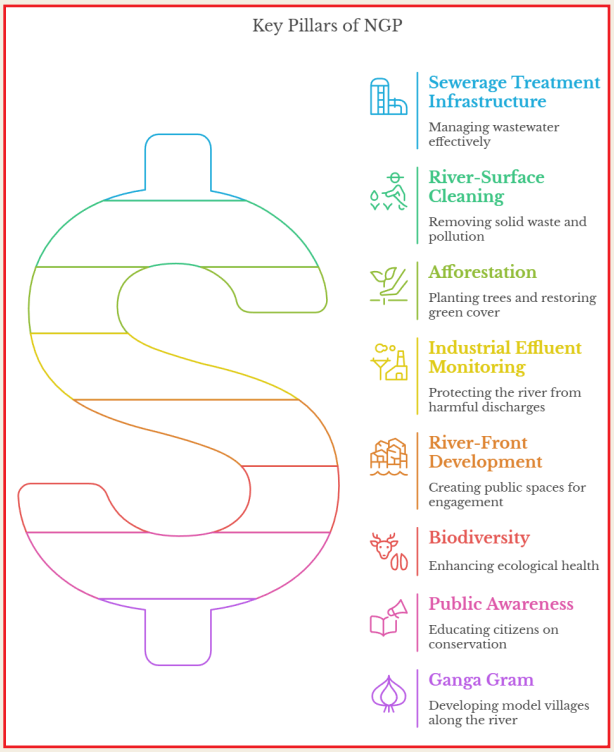
- **Strict action against polluters** was emphasized, along with the critical role of community river **guardians (Ganga Praharis)**.

- **Promotion of Natural Farming:**
  - **Natural farming** was promoted to **reduce chemical fertilizer use**, improve soil health, and prevent runoff into rivers.
  - **Traditional bio-inputs were recommended** to support sustainable agriculture and water conservation.
- **Role of Technological Integration:**
  - Modern tools like **drones and LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) surveys** are being used to identify pollution hotspots and track drains entering the river.
  - A mobile library, **Pustak Parikrama**, was launched by the **National Book Trust (NBT)** to promote environmental awareness across rural and semi-urban areas.
- **Ecological Restoration Actions:**
  - **Fish fingerlings and turtles** were released at Basi Ghat to restore aquatic life.
  - The rescue centre for **Gangetic dolphins** and **freshwater turtles** plays a crucial role in conservation of endangered species.
- **Tree Plantation and Afforestation:**
  - Several trees were planted under the **"Ek Ped, Maa Ke Naam" initiative**, reinforcing afforestation's role in ecological balance.

Namami Gange Programme

- **About:** It is a **flagship programme** for the **rejuvenation of the Ganga River** and its tributaries by reducing pollution, improving water quality, and restoring the river's ecosystem.
- **Implementation:** Its implementation has been divided into **Entry-Level Activities** (for immediate visible impact), **Medium-Term Activities** (to be implemented within 5 years of time frame) and **Long-Term Activities** (to be implemented within 10 years).

- **8 Pillars of NGP:**



- **Key Interventions:**
  - **Pollution Abatement (Nirmal Ganga):** Setting up **sewage treatment plants (STPs)**, reducing industrial and domestic waste discharge.
  - **Improving Ecology and Flow (Aviral Ganga):** Restoring **natural flow and biodiversity**, implementing water conservation measures.
  - **Strengthening People-River Connect (Jan Ganga):** Promoting **community participation and awareness**, involving **local stakeholders in conservation efforts.**
  - **Facilitating Research and Policy (Gyan Ganga):** Supporting **scientific research and studies,** formulating **evidence-based policies.**

Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam' Campaign

- **About:** It aims to **honor mothers by encouraging tree planting in their names**, combining environmental conservation with a tribute to motherhood, symbolizing how mothers, like trees, nurture and sustain life.

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- It was launched by the **Prime Minister** on **World Environment Day, 5th June, 2024**.
- **Objective:** To promote **environmental preservation**, **increase forest cover**, and support **sustainable development** while **honoring mothers.**
- **World Record Achievement:** On **22nd September 2024**, 128 Infantry Battalion & Ecological Task Force of the Territorial Army planted over 5 lakh saplings in one hour in Jaisalmer.

Horizontal Reservation for Agniveers in UP

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh government** has announced a **20%** horizontal reservation to **former** Agniveers in various positions within the state police force.

- In addition to reservation, the government has also provided a **3-year age relaxation** to facilitate their recruitment.

Key Points

- **The Agnipath Scheme:**
  - **About:**
    - The term **"Agniveer"** translates to "Fire-Warriors" and is a **new military rank.**
    - It is a scheme of **recruiting army personnel below officer ranks** such as **soldiers, airmen, and sailors** who are not commissioned officers to the **Indian Armed Forces.**
    - They are recruited for a **period of 4 years**, after which, **up to 25%** of these recruits (called Agniveers), can join the services on a **permanent commission** (another 15 years), subject to merit and organisational requirements.
    - At present, **all sailors, airmen, and soldiers**, except the technical cadre of the medical branch, are recruited to the services under this scheme.
  - **Eligibility Criteria:**
    - Candidates between the age of **17.5 years to 23 years** are eligible to apply (the upper age limit was increased from 21).
    - **Girls under the given age limit are open for agnipath entry**, while there is no such reservation for women under this scheme.
  - **Pay & Benefits:**
    - **Death on Duty:** The family gets a combined sum of **Rs 1 crore**, which includes both the **Seva Nidhi package** and the soldier's unserved salary.
    - **Disability:** An Agniveer can receive compensation up to **Rs 44 lakh** depending on the severity of the disability. This amount is provided **only if the disability is caused** by or worsened due to military service.
    - **Pensions:** Agniveers won't receive a regular pension after their 4-year service, unlike soldiers in the traditional system.
  - **Only the 25%** who get selected for permanent commission will be eligible for a pension.
  - **Goal of Agnipath:**
    - This scheme aims to **maintain a youthful profile in the armed forces** while **optimising the force structure**, thereby enhancing operational efficiency and ensuring **long-term fiscal sustainability in defence spending.**

Reservation

- Reservation is a form of **affirmative action, created to promote equality among marginalized sections,** so as to protect them from social and historical injustice.
- Generally, it means giving **preferential treatment to marginalised sections** of society in employment and access to education.
- It was also originally initiate **to correct historical injustice of discrimination and to give a boost to disadvantaged groups**.
- In India, people have been historically discriminated against on the basis of caste.

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- **Vertical Reservation:**
  - Reservation for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes is referred to as vertical reservation.
  - It **applies separately for each of the groups** specified under the law.
  - **Example: Article 16(4)** of the Constitution contemplates vertical reservation.
- **Horizontal Reservation:**
  - It refers to the **equal opportunity provided to other categories of beneficiaries** such as women, veterans, the transgender community, and individuals **with disabilities**, cutting through the vertical categories.
    - The horizontal quota is **applied separately to each vertical category, and not across the board.**
  - **Example: Article 15 (3)** of the Constitution contemplates horizontal reservation.

Homage to Sacred Buddha Relics

Why in News?

A **veneration ceremony** was held at **the National Museum** (New Delhi), where devotees gathered to pay their final respects to the **sacred relics of the Buddha** before they returned to **Sarnath** for re-enshrinement at the **Mulagandha Kuti Vihar Temple, Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh.**

- The ceremony was **organized by the National Museum** and the **International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)** with support from **the Ministry of Culture.**

Key Points

- **About the Relics:**
  - These relics are enshrined in the **Mulagandha Kuti Vihar Temple located in Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh.**
    - It is run by the **Mahabodhi Society**, which was founded by **Anagarika Dharmapala.**
  - The remains were excavated by **H. Longhurst** at **Nagarjunakonda (Andhra Pradesh)** during **1927–1931**.
  - These relics were handed over to the Mahabodhi Society on 27th December 1932 by **Rai Bahadur Dayaram Sahni** on behalf of the **Viceroy of India.**
- **Spiritual Significance of Sarnath:**
  - **Sarnath** is regarded as one of the most **revered pilgrimage destinations in Buddhism**, especially in the 21st century.
  - It was at Sarnath that **Gautama Buddha delivered his first sermon** after attaining enlightenment, thereby setting the **Dharmachakra (Wheel of Dharma)** in motion.
  - Sarnath is also considered the **birthplace of the Sangha**—the community of the Buddha's disciples and followers.
  - **Emperor Ashoka** is believed to have constructed **the Dhameka Stupa** at **Sarnath in 249 BCE**, commemorating the Buddha's first sermon.
  - In the 12th century CE, the **wife of King Govinda Chandra commissioned the Dharma-Chakra-Jina Vihar monastery at Sarnath**, further enriching its spiritual heritage.

International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)

- It is the **largest religious Buddhist organization.**
- The aim of the association is to **build the role of Buddhism on the global stage**, to help preserve Buddhism's heritage, share knowledge and promote its values, and to represent Buddhism through meaningful participation in global dialogue.
- In **November 2011 the 'Global Buddhist Congregation' (GBC) was hosted in New Delhi,** where the attendees unanimously adopted a resolution to form an international umbrella body—the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC).
- **Headquarters:** Delhi

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GAUTAM BUDDHA

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Believed to be 9th of the 10 incarnations of Lord Vishnu (Dashavatar)

BIRTH

- Born as Siddhartha (563 BC)
- Birthplace – Lumbini (Nepal) near Kapilavastu

PARENTS

- Father – elected ruler of Kapilvastu; headed Shakya republican clan
- Mother – princess from Koshalan dynasty

IMPORTANT EVENTS

- Buddha's Birth
- The Great Departure (Mahabhinishkramana)
- Enlightenment (Nirvana)
- First Sermon (Dhammachakraparivartan)
- Death (Mahaparinirvana)

Buddha referred to himself as Tathagata (one who has thus come/gone) and has been addressed as Bhagavat (in Buddhist texts)

CONTEMPORARIES

- Vardhaman Mahavira
- Bimbisara
- Ajatshatru

OTHER IMPORTANT PLACES ASSOCIATED WITH BUDDHA

- Bodh Gaya (Enlightenment) (named Buddha after attaining enlightenment)
- Sarnath (first sermon)
- Vaishali (last sermon)
- Kushinagara (death place (483 BC))

Bachpan Day Care Centres

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government is set to expand its initiatives for children with special needs and persons with disabilities by opening **Bachpan Day Care Centres in 26 more districts**, alongside launching new schemes to improve accessibility, education, rehabilitation, and training.

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Key Points

- **About the Bachpan Day Care Centres:** They are specialized facilities established by the Uttar Pradesh government to provide early intervention, care, education, and social training to children with special needs.
  - These centres **aim to nurture the overall development of differently-abled children** by offering a supportive and inclusive environment from an early age.
  - Currently, **these centres operate in 25 districts**, covering all divisional headquarters and seven aspirational districts.
    - The **seven aspirational districts of UP–** Chitrakoot, Fatehpur, Bahraich, Shrawasti, Balrampur, Siddharthnagar, and Chandauli.
- **Accessibility and Infrastructure Improvements:**
  - A new scheme has been proposed to ensure that **all stadiums and sports complexes are made fully accessible** to persons with disabilities.
    - Additionally, **infrastructure across the state will be upgraded to enhance accessibility** and comfort for individuals with disabilities, promoting inclusivity and equal participation in public spaces.
  - The step aims not only to promote their participation in sports **but also to reinforce the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'**.
- **Digital Transformation in Special Education:**
  - Introduction of an **E-Learning Management System portal** for special schools.
  - Enables real-time monitoring of academic activities and student talents.
  - Enhances educational quality and **fosters the holistic development** of children with special needs.
- **Rehabilitation and Support for the Intellectually Challenged:**
  - Plans to establish shelter homes-cum-training centres in every district.
  - These centres will provide a safe environment and **skill-based training**.
  - Supported by government and private entities to encourage independent living.
- **Training and Support for Special Educators:**
  - Introduction of in-service refresher courses and **training programmes** for special educators.
  - Aim to keep teachers updated with modern pedagogical methods.
  - Helps educators better address the evolving needs of students with disabilities.

Schemes Related to Children with Special Needs

- **Divyang Pension Yojana:** The state government's pension scheme provides monthly financial assistance to **disabled persons of 18 years or more**, helping improve their livelihood and standard of living. The **pension amount** is periodically increased to offer better support.
- **Deen Dayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS):** The scheme was launched in 1999 and was revised and renamed in 2003. It was previously known as the **"Scheme for Promoting Voluntary Action for the Disabled"**.
  - **DDRS** is a Central Sector Scheme that provides financial assistance to voluntary organizations working for the education and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities.

Miss World 2025

Why in News?

Opal Suchata Chuangsri of **Thailand** was crowned **Miss World 2025** during the grand finale of the **72nd Miss World pageant** held at the HITEX Exhibition Centre in Hyderabad, Telangana on **31st May 2025.**

Key Points

- **About:**
  - It was a **month-long celebration** featuring **108 contestants** from around the globe, including historical tours, cultural showcases, and **advocacy campaigns** led by the participants.
  - The event was hosted by **Miss World 2016 Stephanie Del Valle** and Indian TV personality **Sachiin Kumbhar**.

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- **Format:**
  - Contestants advanced through **several fast-track events**, including the Head to Head Challenge, Top Model, Beauty with a Purpose, Talent, Sports, and Multimedia competitions.
  - From the initial pool of 108 entrants, the competition was **gradually narrowed down to the Top 40 quarterfinalists,** then the Top 10 contestants from each continental group, followed by the Top 5, Top 2, and **finally, one crowned winner.**
- **Winner:**
  - Opal Suchata Chuangsri, representing Thailand, won the Miss World 2025 crown.
    - She was crowned by Krystyna Pyszková, (Czech Republic) Miss World 2024.
  - **Ethiopia's Hasset Dereje** emerged as the first runner-up and **Maja Klajda from Poland** won the second runner-up title.

- **Continental Queens:** Winners were selected from each continent through a **rapid-fire round:**
  - **Miss Martinique** – Americas and Caribbean
  - **Miss Ethiopia** – Africa
  - **Miss Poland** – Europe
  - **Miss Thailand** – Asia and Oceania
- **Other Highlights:**
  - **Miss Indonesia Monica Kezia Sembiring** won the **Beauty with a Purpose** Round for her **project *"Pipeline for Lifeline,"*** aimed at improving access to clean water and sanitation.
  - Actor **Sonu Sood** was honored with the **Miss World Humanitarian Award**, presented by **Rana Daggubati**.
- **India's Participation:**
  - Nandini Gupta, Miss India 2025, secured a place as **one of the four continental winners** at the 72nd Miss World by excelling in the **Top Model Challenge segment** but was eliminated after **reaching the Top 20.**

Ghatampur Thermal Power Project

Why in News?

The Prime Minister, on 30th May 2025, dedicated Unit-1 of the **Ghatampur Thermal Power Project in Kanpur (U.P.)** to the nation, marking a significant milestone in India's energy sector.

Key Points

- **About the Project:**
  - The Ghatampur Thermal Power Project has a total installed capacity of **1,980 MW**, comprising **three supercritical units** of **660 MW** each.
    - The remaining two units are scheduled to be commissioned by the **financial year 2025–26**.
  - It is being implemented by Neyveli Uttar Pradesh Power Limited (NUPPL), a joint venture between NLC India Limited and Uttar Pradesh Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (UPRVUNL).
  - The total project cost is estimated at **₹21,780.94 crore**.
- **Power Allocation:**
  - A **Power Purchase Agreement (PPA)** has been signed to allocate **1,487.28 MW (75.12%)** of the generated power to **Uttar Pradesh** and the remaining **492.72 MW (24.88%)** is earmarked for **Assam**.
- **Environmental Safeguards:**
  - The plant is equipped with **Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR)** technology to reduce nitrogen oxide (NOx) emissions.

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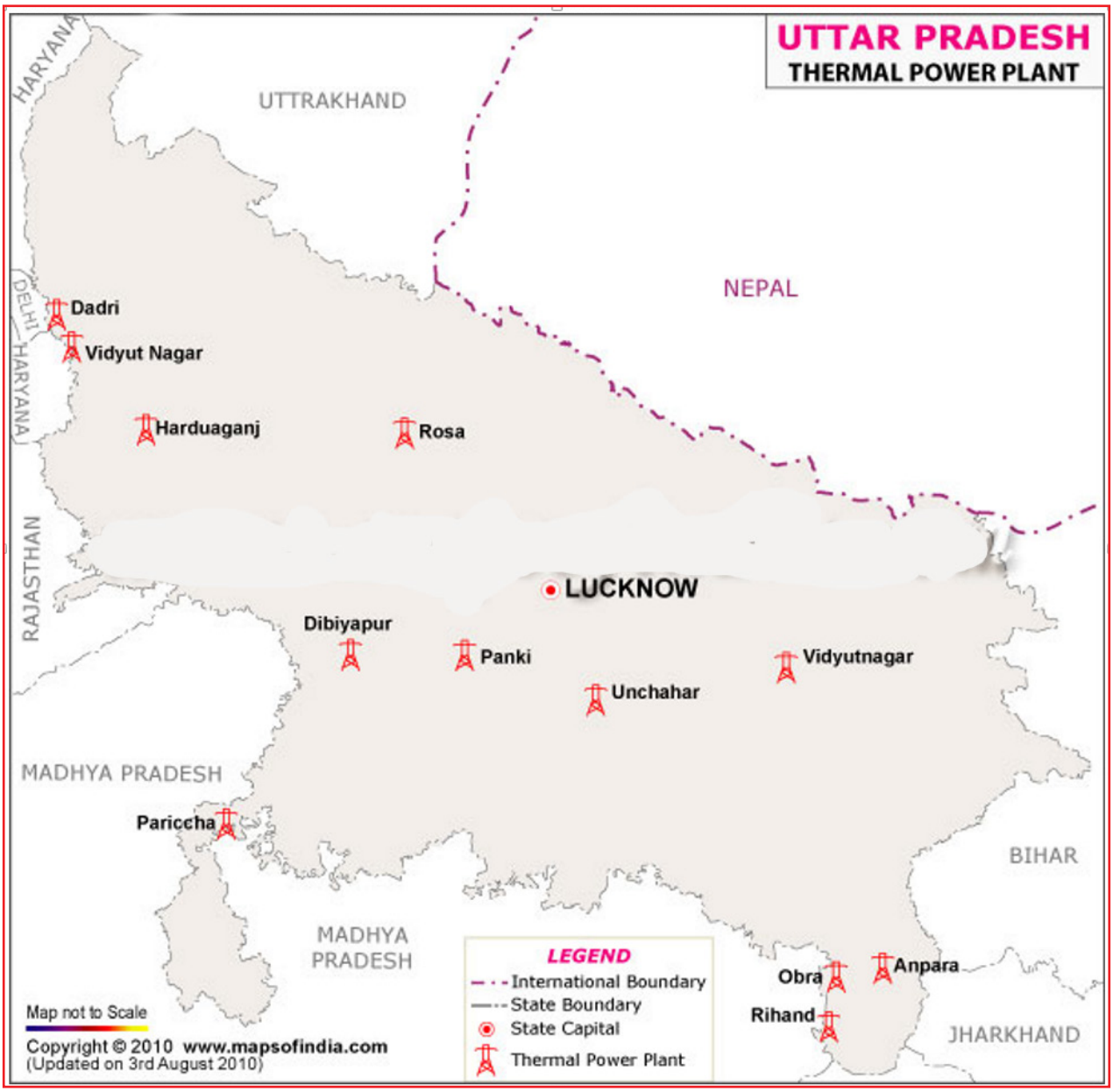
- Flue Gas Desulphurization (FGD) systems have been installed to control sulphur dioxide (SOx) emissions.
- The project will have a **Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD)** system to ensure no water is discharged from the plant.



Gallantry Awards 2025

Why in News?

The President of India conferred Gallantry Awards, including **6 Kirti Chakras** (4 posthumously) and **33 Shaurya Chakras** (7 posthumously), to personnel from the **Armed Forces**, Central Armed Police Forces, and **State/UT Police,** which were **announced** on the eve of the 76th Republic Day 2025.

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Key Points

Gallantry Awards

- **About:** They are given to the personnel for displaying **raw courage, unparalleled bravery** and **total disregard to personal safety** in the line of duty.
  - These gallantry awards are announced **twice a year**, first on the occasion of **Republic Day** and then on the occasion of **Independence Day**.
- **Types:**
  - **Gallantry Award in the Face of the Enemy:**
    - **Param Vir Chakra (PVC):** It shall have embossed on the obverse **four replicas of "Indra's Vajra"** with the **State Emblem** embossed in the centre.
- It is awarded for the **most conspicuous bravery or some daring or pre-eminent act of valour or self-sacrifice**, in the **presence of the enemy**.
    - **Mahavir Chakra (MVC):** It shall have embossed on the obverse a **five-pointed heraldic star** with the points of the **star just touching the rim**. The star shall have in the centre a **domed gilded State Emblem**.
- It is awarded for **acts of gallantry** in the **presence of the enemy**.
    - **Vir Chakra:** The star will feature a **Chakra at its centre**, with a domed centerpiece inside the Chakra bearing the gilded State Emblem.
- It is awarded for **acts of gallantry** in the **presence of the enemy on land, at sea or in the air**. The decoration may be awarded **posthumously.**
  - **Gallantry Award Other than in the Face of Enemy:**
    - **Medals:** It includes **Ashok Chakra**, **Kirti Chakra**, and **Shaurya Chakra**, on which the **obverse** of the medal shall be embossed with a **replica of the respective chakra** in the **centre**, surrounded by a **lotus wreath**.
- Along the **rim**, on the inner side, shall be a pattern of **lotus leaves, flowers, and buds.**
- On its reverse shall be embossed the respective words, both in Hindi and English, the two versions being **separated by two lotus flowers.**
- **Order of precedence of the Award:**
  - Param Vir Chakra
  - Ashoka Chakra
  - Mahavir Chakra
  - Kirti Chakra
  - Vir Chakra
  - Shaurya Chakra

- **Eligibility:**
  - **For Param Vir Chakra, the Maha Vir Chakra and the Vir Chakra:** All ranks of the Naval, Military, Air, Reserve, and Territorial Forces, including medical and nursing staff, and civilians serving under their direction.
  - **For Ashoka Chakra, Kirti Chakra & Shaurya Chakra:** All ranks of the Armed Forces, Reserve and Territorial Forces, Nursing Services, Police, Central Para-Military Forces, Railway Protection Force, and civilian citizens.

Note: For **each subsequent act** of similar bravery, recipients are recognized by a **Bar to the Chakra.**

- Also, both **Chakra** and **Bar to the chakra** for additional bravery **may be** awarded **posthumously.**

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CIVILIAN AND GALLANTRY AWARDS

CIVILIAN AWARDS

Bharat Ratna

- India's highest civilian award; instituted in 1954
- Awarded for exceptional service/performance of the highest order in any field of human endeavour
- Award includes certificate & medallion (no monetary grant)
- Recommended to President by the PM
- Can be given (max) thrice per year

Padma Awards

- Instituted in 1954; announced annually on eve of Republic Day
- Recognises achievements in all fields/disciplines involving public service
- Categories: Padma Vibhushan > Padma Bhushan > Padma Shri
- Recommended by Padma Awards Committee (constituted by PM annually)
- Suspended twice - 1978-79 and 1993-97
- Max no. of awards per year - 120

GALLANTRY AWARDS

- Wartime Gallantry instituted on 26th January 1950
- Peacetime Gallantry instituted on 4th January 1952
- Announced twice a year - Republic Day and Independence Day
- Order of Precedence - Param Vir Chakra > Ashoka Chakra > Mahavir Chakra > Kirti Chakra > Vir Chakra > Shaurya Chakra
- Eligibility -
  - All officers of all ranks (Army, Navy, IAF), Reserve forces, Territorial army
  - People providing nursing services under any of the above forces

Wartime Gallantry Awards

Param Vir Chakra | Maha Vir Chakra | Vir Chakra

Peacetime Gallantry Awards

Ashoka Chakra | Kirti Chakra | Shaurya Chakra

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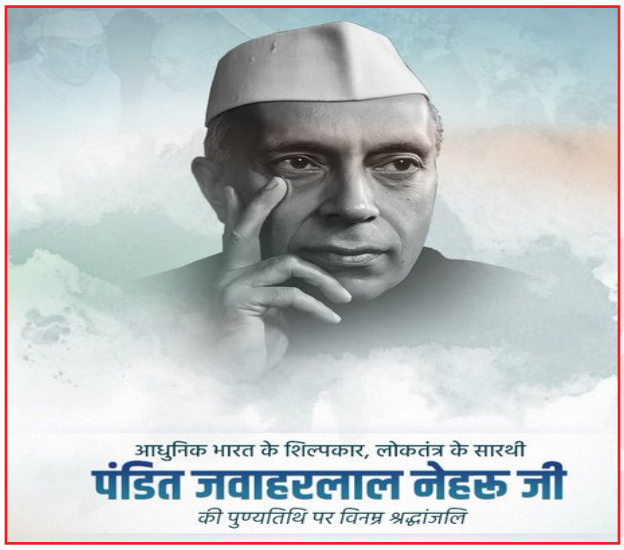
Death Anniversary Of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru

Why in News?

The **death anniversary of India's first Prime Minister, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru**, was observed on **27th May 2025**.

- He is remembered as the **Architect of Modern India**.



Key Points

Jawaharlal Nehru (1889-1964)

- **Early Life:** He was born on 14th November 1889, into a **Kashmiri Brahmin family in Allahabad (now Prayagraj)**.
  - Fondly called **'Chacha Nehru'** for his deep affection for children, **his birthday is celebrated as Children's Day every year in India**.
  - He attended his **first Congress session in 1912** at **Bankipore (Patna)** as a delegate and joined **Annie Besant's Home Rule League** in **1916**, becoming its **Allahabad Secretary** in **1919.**
- **Contribution in Freedom Struggle:** He was elected **Congress President** at the **1929 Lahore session**, passing the historic **Purna Swaraj resolution** for complete independence, and later presided over the **1936 Lucknow** and **1937 Faizpur** sessions, promoting **socialism.**
  - He drafted the **Fundamental Rights** and **Economic Policy (1929-31)**, adopted at the **1931 Karachi Session** under **Sardar Patel**, and advocated legal defence for **Indian National Army (INA) soldiers**.
  - He led the **Interim Government** in 1946.
- **Post-Independence:** In **1953**, he formed the **States Reorganisation Commission**, promoted **industrialisation** through **Five-Year Plans,** and led the **Non-Alignment Movement**.
- **Awards:** He was awarded the **Bharat Ratna (1955)** and **World Peace Council Prize (posthumously, 1970)**.
- **Literary Contributions:** The **Discovery of India**, **An Autobiography**, **Glimpses of World History** and **Letters from a Father to His Daughter**.

Semiconductor Unit in Uttar Pradesh

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet has approved a ₹3,700 crore display driver **chip manufacturing unit at Jewar, Uttar Pradesh**.

- This project is the **sixth semiconductor manufacturing unit** sanctioned under the first phase of the **India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)**.

Key Points

- **Project Details:**
  - The unit will be a joint venture between **Indian firm HCL and Taiwanese electronics** manufacturing giant Foxconn.
    - Commercial production at the Jewar plant is **expected to begin by 2027**, necessitating rapid construction and development.
  - Chips manufactured will be **used in laptops, PCs, smartphones, and automobiles**.
- **Strategic Importance:**
  - This is the **first semiconductor manufacturing plant in Uttar Pradesh**, located in the rapidly developing industrial area of Jewar.
    - The Uttar Pradesh government has launched its own **UP Semiconductor Policy-2024.**

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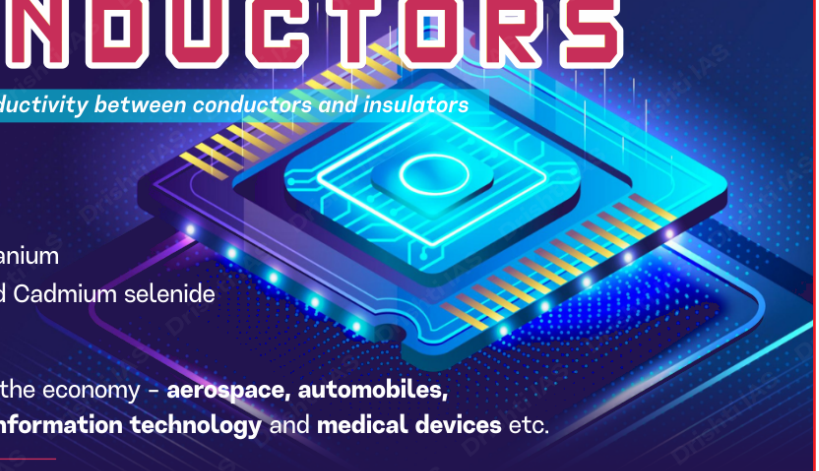
SEMICONDUCTORS

Semiconductors are materials having conductivity between conductors and insulators



EXAMPLES

- **Pure Elements:** Silicon and Germanium
- **Compounds:** Gallium Arsenide and Cadmium selenide

SIGNIFICANCE

- Essential to almost all sectors of the economy - **aerospace, automobiles, communications, clean energy, information technology** and **medical devices** etc.

SEMICONDUCTORS AND INDIA

- **India Imports from: China, Taiwan, USA** and **Japan**
- **Indian Semiconductor Market:** Expected to reach **USD 55 bn** by **2026**

SCHEMES

- **Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme**
- **Design Linked Incentive (DLI) Scheme**
- Scheme for Promotion of Manufacturing of Electronic Components and Semi-conductors (SPECS)

OBJECTIVES

- Encourage semiconductor and display manufacturing in the country.
- Nurture >20 domestic companies in semiconductor design Achieve a turnover of > Rs.1500 crore in next 5 years
- Manufacture electronics components and semiconductors

INDIA'S SEMICONDUCTOR MISSION (ISM)

VISION

- Build a **vibrant semiconductor** and **display design** and **innovation ecosystem**

LAUNCHED

- 2021

NODAL MINISTRY

- Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)

TOTAL FINANCIAL OUTLAY

- Rs 76,000 crore

COMPONENTS

- Scheme for setting up of Semiconductor Fabs
- Scheme for setting up of Display Fabs
- Scheme for setting up of Compound Semiconductors/Silicon Photonics/ Sensors (including MEMS) Fabs/ Discrete Semiconductors Fab and Semiconductor ATMP/OSAT
- DLI Scheme

Drishti IAS

This ambitious policy is **designed to boost local semiconductor manufacturing,** enhancing India's strategic independence in critical technology sectors.

- The plant is **expected to fill a critical gap in India's display and electronics value chain**.

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- Once operational, it is anticipated that a display panel manufacturing plant will also be established in India, potentially **meeting about 40% of India's display capacity**.

- **Significance of the Project:**
  - **Boost to Make in India & Electronics Manufacturing:** The project aligns with India's push towards self-reliance in semiconductor manufacturing, a key component for technological sovereignty and economic growth.
  - **Employment & Industrial Development:** The unit will spur industrial activity in Uttar Pradesh, generating employment and attracting ancillary industries.
  - **Reducing Import Dependence:** Enhancing domestic chip production reduces reliance on imports and strengthens India's electronics supply chain resilience.

India Semiconductor Mission (ISM)

- The ISM was **launched in 2021** with a total financial outlay of Rs 76,000 crore under the aegis of the Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY).
- It is **part of the comprehensive program for the development of sustainable semiconductor** and display ecosystems in the country.
- The programme **aims to provide financial support** to companies investing in semiconductors, display manufacturing and design ecosystem.
- Envisioned to be led by global experts in the Semiconductor and Display industry, ISM will **serve as the nodal agency for efficient, coherent and smooth implementation of the schemes**.

North India's Largest Film City in Noida

Why in News?

The **International Film City project** in **Uttar Pradesh** advanced with the submission of its layout plan to the **Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA)**.

Key Points

- **Project Overview:**
  - The Film City will be located in **Sector-21 of Greater Noida**, along the Yamuna Expressway.
  - It will cover a total area of 1,000 acres, making it the largest film city in North India.
  - Phase 1 will cover 230 acres with an estimated investment of ₹1,510 crore.
- **UP Film Policy 2023:**
  - The government provides a **50% subsidy on the total cost** of films made in regional languages such as **Awadhi, Braj, Bundeli, and Bhojpuri**.
  - For **Hindi films**, a **subsidy of up to 25%** of the total production cost is available.
  - Films that complete **at least 50% of their shooting days in Uttar Pradesh** are eligible for a **subsidy of ₹1 crore**.
  - If a film completes **two-thirds of its shooting days in the state**, it becomes eligible for a **maximum subsidy of ₹2 crore**.
  - Incentives for Engaging Local Talent:
    - A **grant of ₹25 lakh**, or the actual remuneration paid (whichever is lower), is provided for featuring **actors who are residents of Uttar Pradesh**.
    - An **additional grant of ₹5 lakh**, or **2% of the total subsidy** (whichever is lower), is provided for employing **local singers, composers, lyricists, directors, cameramen, and other crew members** from the state.
  - **OTT Productions Incentives:**
    - Web-series shot at least two-thirds in UP receive 50% of production costs or ₹10 lakh per episode (whichever is less).
    - Web-films get 25% of costs or up to ₹1 crore under similar criteria.
  - **Film Infrastructure Subsidies:**
    - Film Training Institutes get 25% capital subsidy or ₹50 lakh (minimum ₹50 lakh investment).
    - Film studios/labs receive 25% subsidy or ₹50 lakh; rises to 35% in **Poorvanchal, Vindhyanchal, and Bundelkhand** (max ₹50 lakh).

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- **Outdoor Shooting Support:**
  - 25% discount on accommodation in UP STDC hotels/motels.
  - Government guest house rooms at standard rates for film crews.
- **Film Education Support:**
  - ₹25,000 stipend per student refunded for training 10 students each at FTII Pune and Satyajit Ray Film & Television Institute Kolkata..
- Nodal Agency:
  - The implementation and coordination of the film policy are managed by **Film Bandhu**, the state's official film promotion body.

Uttar Pradesh Abolishes District-Wise Quota under NFSA

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has decided to **scrap the district-wise quota system** for beneficiary allocation under the **National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013** **to ensure more equitable coverage of eligible families**, especially in backward and underserved districts.

Key Points

- **Current Scenario in the State:**
  - The Central government determines the **food grain allocation for each state under the NFSA** based on a fixed population coverage of 64.46% in rural areas and 78.54% in urban areas.
- **Policy Change:**
  - **Removal of District-wise Quota:**
    - Uttar Pradesh **traditionally followed an additional district-wise cap**, allocating beneficiaries per district.
    - This **resulted in a disproportionate distribution** that favored relatively prosperous districts such as Ghaziabad and Gautam Buddha Nagar, leaving poorer districts **often unable to accommodate all eligible families**.
  - **Introduction of State-wide Allocation:**
    - The new system will use **state-wide population data** and **eligibility norms** to allocate benefits.
    - This is **expected to ensure that distribution aligns more closely** with the eligibility criteria set forth in the Act, **rather than being constrained by arbitrary administrative limits**.
- **Impact on Beneficiary Coverage:**
  - As part of the redistribution process, 5,000 new beneficiaries have been added in each of the districts of Sitapur, Barabanki, and Lalitpur.
  - These additions were made by reallocating the corresponding number of beneficiaries from **Ghaziabad** and **Gautam Buddha Nagar**.
  - In the **Bundelkhand region**, the NFSA coverage is being increased to **90%**.
  - In several **deserving districts in eastern Uttar Pradesh**, the coverage is being raised to **85%**.
- **Administrative Performance:**
  - According to the April report from the **Integrated Grievance Redressal System (IGRS)** portal, the **Department of Food and Civil Supplies** ranked **fourth** in resolving public complaints.
    - It was ranked just behind the **Khadi and Village Industries**, **Cooperative Department**, and **Excise Department**.
  - Departments that ranked among the bottom four include **Industries and Infrastructure Development**, **Housing and Urban Planning**, **Environment and Climate Change**, and **Women Welfare**.

National Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013

- **About NFSA:**
  - It was enacted on **5th July 2013**, with the aim of ensuring food and nutritional security in India.
  - It marked a shift from a welfare-based approach to a **rights-based approach** by legally entitling a significant portion of the population to receive subsidized food grains.

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- **Objectives:**
  - The Act aims to provide **access to adequate quantities of quality food at affordable prices** to people to live a life with dignity.
  - It seeks to ensure that **food security is a legal right** for eligible individuals.
  - It also promotes **women empowerment** by designating the eldest woman (aged 18 years or above) as the head of the household for ration card purposes.
- **Coverage and Entitlements:**
  - The NFSA legally entitled up to **75% of the rural population** and **50% of the urban population** to receive food grains at subsidized rates.
    - This covers approximately **81.34 crore individuals** across India.
- **Categories of Beneficiaries:**
  - **Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)** households, considered the poorest of the poor, are entitled to **35 kilograms of food grains per family per month**.
  - **Priority households** are entitled to receive **5 kilograms of food grains per person per month**.
- **Prices for Food Grains:**
  - The Act specifies subsidized prices for food grains:
    - **Rice** is provided at ₹3 per kilogram.
    - **Wheat** is provided at ₹2 per kilogram.
    - **Coarse grains** are provided at ₹1 per kilogram.
  - These prices were initially set for three years from the date of implementation but have been **extended periodically** by the central government.
- **Responsibilities Under NFSA:**
  - **Central Government:**
    - The central government is responsible for allocating food grains to States and Union Territories.
    - It manages the transportation of food grains to designated depots and provides financial assistance for further distribution.
    - It also holds the power to make rules for the implementation of the Act under **Section 39**.
  - **State and Union Territory Governments:**
    - State/UT governments are responsible for **identifying eligible households**, **issuing ration cards**, and **distributing food grains** through **Fair Price Shops (FPS)**.
    - They must also **monitor the FPS network**, issue licenses, and **establish grievance redressal systems**.
- **Additional Provisions:**
  - In case of **non-supply of entitled food grains or meals**, beneficiaries are entitled to a **Food Security Allowance**, which must be provided by the state government.
  - A **"Tide Over Allocation"** is available to protect states whose NFSA allocation is lower than their previous TPDS allocation.
  - The central government has notified several rules under the Act, including:
    - Food Security Allowance Rules, 2015
    - Cash Transfer of Food Subsidy Rules, 2015
    - Assistance to State Governments Rules, 2015

Buffer Mein Safar Yojana

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh Forest and Wildlife Department** has launched a new **ecotourism** initiative named **'Buffer Mein Safar Yojana'**.

Key Points

Buffer Mein Safar Yojana

- **Objectives of the Scheme:**
  - The primary goal of the scheme is to promote **sustainable and eco-friendly tourism** in the buffer zones of tiger reserves.
  - The initiative seeks to **empower local communities** by offering them training and **employment** opportunities within the **tourism** sector.

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- It also aims to strengthen wildlife conservation efforts by encouraging community-led protection of biodiversity.

- **Significance:**
  - The initiative is expected to significantly contribute to **Uttar Pradesh's goal** of becoming a **leading ecotourism destination** in India.
  - The integrated approach of combining **tourism, conservation, and local employment** may also serve as a **model for other states** seeking to balance ecological sustainability with economic growth.
- **Implementation Regions:**
  - **Key Tiger Reserves and Buffer Zones:**
    - The scheme is being implemented in major tiger reserve buffer zones such as Dudhwa, Pilibhit, and Lakhimpur Kheri, which are known for their rich biodiversity and proximity to the India-Nepal border.
    - Additional ecologically significant areas like Sohagibarwa and Katarniaghat wildlife sanctuaries have also been included under the scheme.
  - Special Ecological Spot:
    - **Semrai Lake**, an important stopover for migratory birds, is being developed as a part of the ecotourism circuit.
- This will provide birdwatchers with new opportunities to explore
- Tourism Infrastructure Development:
  - A **modern information centre** has been established at the **Dudhwa Tiger Reserve** to enhance visitor engagement.
  - The centre will offer educational insights into the region's flora and fauna, along with detailed information about conservation efforts.

Dudhwa National Park

- It is located in Lakhimpur Kheri, Uttar Pradesh, near the Indo-Nepal border.
- It was **established in 1977 as a National Park** (Wildlife Sanctuary since 1958).
- **Wildlife & Ecosystem:**
  - Home to Bengal tigers, leopards, elephants, sloth bears, and **450+ bird species**
  - Features a diverse ecosystem like **grasslands, swamps, and dense forests**
- **Conservation & Ecotourism:**
  - Known for **habitat restoration** and **reintroduction** of endangered species like the **barasingha**
  - Promotes eco-tourism to support local communities and preserve the environment

Pilibhit Tiger Reserve

- In September 2008, it was declared as the **45th Tiger Reserve of India** under the **Project Tiger initiative**.
- **Geography**:
  - The **northern boundary** of Pilibhit Tiger Reserve lies along the **Indo-Nepal border**, providing a natural international frontier.
  - The **southern boundary** is defined by the **Sharda** and **Khakra rivers**, which contribute to the region's rich biodiversity and water resources.
- Ecological Significance:
  - Represents a prime example of the **Terai ecosystem**, known for its **open grasslands, sal forests, water bodies**, and **rich biodiversity**
  - Identified by the Wildlife Institute of India for its unique **ecological and behavioral tiger adaptations** specific to the Tarai region
- **Flora and Fauna:** Key wildlife includes **tigers, swamp deer, Bengal florican, hog deer, leopards**, and a rich prey base (cheetal, sambar, wild boar, blue bull, etc.)

Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary

- It is located in **Uttar Pradesh's Terai region**, **Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary** spans around **400 sq. km** and lies along the **Ghaghara River**.
- It was established in **1975** and designated a **Tiger Reserve in 2008**, it is a key part of the **Dudhwa Tiger Reserve**.

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- **Biodiversity:**
  - Home to **Bengal tigers, Indian elephants, leopards, sloth bears**, and the **endangered Gangetic dolphin.**
  - Rich prey base includes **hog deer, swamp deer,** and more.
  - It is home to over **350 bird species**, including **Indian skimmer, osprey, great hornbill**, and **kingfishers.**
  - The sanctuary features **dense sal forests**, along with **teak, jamun**, and **medicinal plants.**

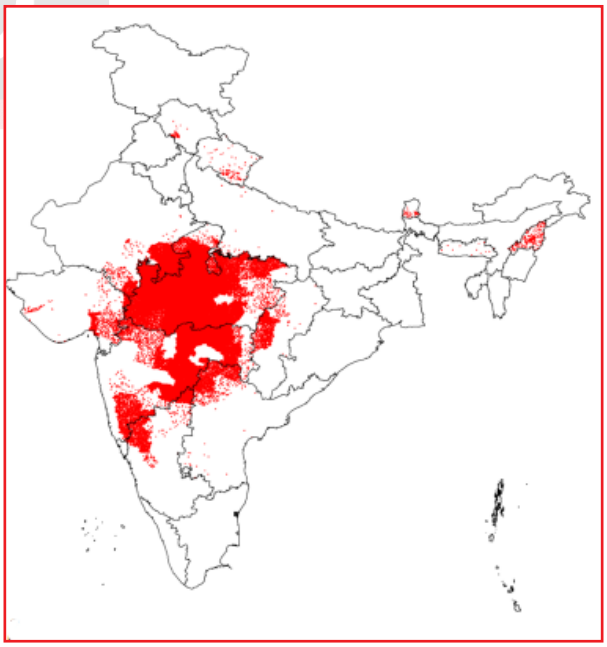
High-Yielding Varieties Of Soybean

Why in News?

Ahead of the **Kharif 2025 season**, the Department of Agriculture has **recommended specific high-yielding soybean varieties for cultivation in the Bundelkhand region** of Uttar Pradesh to optimize yields under local agro-climatic conditions.

Key Points

- **Centrally Notified High-Yielding Varieties:** These varieties have demonstrated excellent adaptability to the **rainfall patterns, soil types**, and temperature profiles typical of the Bundelkhand region.
  - No additional state-specific soybean varieties have been notified exclusively for Uttar Pradesh.
- **Suitability to Regional Conditions:** They are expected to perform well in medium to deep **black soils** and under **monsoon**-dependent rainfall patterns.
- **Soybean Cultivation in India:** The cultivation is **currently concentrated in a few key states**, contributing around **4% to global soybean production**.
  - The major soybean-growing states include **Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat.**
- **Significance of Soybean Cultivation:**
  - **Water Efficiency:** Soybean requires considerably less water than paddy, making it a highly suitable crop for regions with limited water availability.
  - **Economic Viability:** Due to its **lower input costs and decent yield potential**, soybean cultivation can offer farmers earnings that are comparable to, or even better than, those from paddy farming.
  - **Soil Health:** As a legume, soybean enriches soil nitrogen, reducing the need for chemical fertilizers.
  - **Crop Diversification**: Soybean can be effectively integrated into **crop rotation** systems such as soybean–wheat, soybean–peas–summer moong etc., helping farmers diversify their **cropping patterns** and reduce reliance on water-intensive paddy cultivation.
  - **Market and Nutrition Value:** Soybean is rich in both protein and oil content, making it valuable for food, animal feed, and various industrial applications.



Kharif Crops

- **Kharif crops** are the crops that are **sown during the rainy season**, which in India typically lasts from **June to September**.

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- These crops require **a lot of water and hot weather** to grow, and they **depend heavily on monsoon rains**.
- **Sowing and Harvesting:**
  - **Sowing Time:** June to July (beginning of the **monsoon**)
  - **Harvesting Time:** October to November (end of the monsoon)
- **Common Kharif Crops:**
  - **Paddy (rice)**, **Maize (corn)**, **Groundnut (peanut)**, **Cotton**, etc.

Rabi Crops

- **Rabi crops** are grown in the **winter season**, from **October to March**.
- These crops are typically **sown after the monsoon ends** and require **cooler climates** during the growth period and **warm, dry conditions at the time of harvesting**.
- **Sowing and Harvesting:**
  - **Sowing Time:** October to November
  - **Harvesting Time:** March to April
- **Common Rabi Crops: Wheat, Gram** (chana), **Pea**, **Mustard, Linseed**, etc.

Project Alankar

Why in News?

Project Alankar, an educational reform initiative by the Uttar Pradesh government, has been widely appreciated during a meeting chaired by the Prime Minister in New Delhi.

Key Points

Project Alankar

- **About:** It was launched on **1st October 2021**, by the Government of Uttar Pradesh.
  - It aims to achieve **100% compliance** with 35 infrastructure and facility benchmarks in 2,441 government secondary schools.
  - Its primary goal is to create a more **conducive, inclusive, and modern learning environment** for students across the state.
- **Key Features of Project Alankar:**
  - **Upgradation of physical infrastructure** including newly constructed classrooms, science labs, libraries, computer labs, and smart classrooms.
  - **Provision of essential amenities** such as clean drinking water and hygienic toilets, particularly focusing on girls' sanitation facilities.
  - Development of specialized schools under the scheme:
    - **Chief Minister Model Schools** (pre-primary to Class 12) and **Chief Minister Abhyudaya Schools** (pre-primary to Class 8) are also being developed.
- These schools have state-of-the-art facilities, including **Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)** laboratories, computer labs, etc.
- Each Abhyudaya School, designed to accommodate 450 students, was allocated Rs 1.42 crore for development
  - **Renovation and modernization** of 141 Sanskrit schools across 7 districts, with dedicated funding of Rs 14.94 crore for their rejuvenation.
- **Funding and Implementation:**
  - Funding sources for Project Alankar include the state government, **Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan**, **Gram Panchayats**, **urban local bodies**, corporate **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** **contributions**, and voluntary donations.
  - Implementation is **rigorously monitored by district-level committees** headed by district magistrates and overseen by the state education director.
- **Impact and Outcomes:**
  - According to the **Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) 2024**, government secondary school enrolment **increased by 23%** between 2022-23 and 2024-25.
  - Primary school attendance (classes 1–5) **rose by 11.5%** from 2010 to 2024, while upper primary attendance (classes 6–8) grew by 9.6% between 2018 and 2024 — **the highest in the country**.

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- Usage of school libraries surged by 55.2%, and access to girls' toilet facilities improved by 54.4%, **reflecting better sanitation and learning support**.

Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan

- **About:** Introduced in the **Union Budget 2018-19**, Samagra Shiksha is a comprehensive program covering education from **pre-nursery to Class 12** to ensure equitable learning outcomes.
- **Key Features:**
  - **Integration of Schemes:** It subsumes three earlier schemes:
  - **Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA):** Focused on universal primary education.
  - **Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA):** Aimed at secondary education.
  - **Teacher Education (TE):** Focused on training teachers.
  - **Sector-Wide Development Approach:** It streamlines implementation across all levels (state, district, and sub-district) instead of fragmented project-based objectives.
  - **Alignment with SDGs:** Ensures free, equitable, and quality education **(SDG 4.1)** while eliminating gender disparities and ensuring access for vulnerable groups **(SDG 4.5)**.
- **Implementation:** It is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)** implemented through a single State Implementation Society (SIS) at the State/UT level.
  - SIS is a state-registered body implementing CSS and development programs.

World Turtle Day 2025: UP's Turtle Conservation Efforts

Why in News?

As the world marked **World Turtle Day on 23rd May**, aimed at raising awareness about the ecological importance and protection of turtles, **Uttar Pradesh emerged as a leading state in India for turtle conservation**.

Key Points

- **Turtle Species in India:**
  - India is home to **30 species of freshwater turtles**, **26** of which are listed under **Schedule I** of the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**.
  - India also hosts **5 sea turtle species: Olive Ridley, Green, Loggerhead, Hawksbill, and Leatherback.** All of which are protected under **Schedule I of WPA, 1972**.
- **Species in Uttar Pradesh:**
  - Out of 30 species of turtles found in India, **15 are found in UP**, including Brahmani, Pacheda, Kori Pacheda, Kalitoh, Kala Kacchua, Haldi Baath Kacchua, Saal Kacchua Tilakdhari, Dhor Kacchua, Bhootkatha Kacchua, Pahadi Trikutki Kacchua, Sundari Kacchua, Morpankhi Kacchua, Katahwa Litherhwa, Syontar Fighter, Parvati Kacchua, and others.
- **Uttar Pradesh's Conservation Efforts:**
  - The **Sarnath Turtle Breeding and Rehabilitation Centre**, which was renovated and redeveloped in 2017, has conserved 3,298 turtles from 2017 to 2025 and released them into the **Ganga** to keep the ecosystem of the river healthy in Varanasi.
    - The inclusion of the **Turtle Rehabilitation Centre in Namami Gange** since 2017 has also **reduced smuggling of turtles.**
    - Several other conservation centres have been established, including those in Kukrail, Sarnath and Chambal.
  - Under the **Namami Gange Programme**, a turtle sanctuary was set up near Prayagraj in 2020.
    - It covers 30 km of the catchment areas of the River Ganga and surrounding coastal areas. It **stretches across three districts**—starting from Kothari Meja in Prayagraj, passing through Mirzapur and Bhadohi, and reaches up to Uparwar.

PTR's Plan to Curb Illegal Trafficking of Turtles

- **Authorities at Pilibhit Tiger Reserve (PTR)** on World Turtle Day 2025 unveiled a long-term

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strategic plan to curb illegal turtle trafficking, promote scientific conservation, and restore habitats.

- Freshwater turtles are frequently smuggled to countries including China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, and Thailand for use in traditional medicine, and consumption of meat, eggs, and even blood.

- Pilibhit-Kheri region is one of the five most sensitive turtle-trafficking zones in Uttar Pradesh by the **Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB)** during its 2018 **Operation Save Kurma**.
  - **Uttar Pradesh ranks third in turtle diversity** after Assam and West Bengal, with 13 of the (15) species found in Pilibhit's rivers, lakes, Sharda Sagar Dam, and other water bodies.
- The plan includes rehabilitating identified turtle traffickers by linking them with **govt-subsidised pisciculture schemes** as a sustainable livelihood option. **This is the first initiative of its kind in Uttar Pradesh.**
  - A **Turtle Conservation and Research Centre** is also being set up along **River Mala,** funded by **CAMPA.**

Turtles

- **About:**
  - **Turtles** are **reptiles** distinguished by a **cartilaginous shell** developed from their ribs, forming a **protective shield**.
  - Unlike other animals with shells, **turtles cannot shed or exit their shell**, as it is an **integral part of their skeleton.**
- **Habitat:**
  - Turtles can live in **both freshwater** and **marine (sea) environments**.
- **Characteristics:**
  - Turtles are **cold-blooded (ectothermic)** species, i.e., they can **regulate their body temperature by moving between warmer and cooler environments**.
  - Like other ectotherms such as **insects, fish, and amphibians,** they exhibit **slow metabolism** and can **survive extended periods without food or water.**
  - **Species in UP like Katahwa, Morpankhi, Saal, and Sundari** play an essential role in keeping water bodies clean and ecologically balanced amidst growing pollution concerns.
- **Significance:**
  - Turtles are considered one of the oldest and longest-living creatures on earth and play a vital role in maintaining aquatic ecosystems. Often referred to as the **"cleaners of water bodies"**, these creatures help control pollution in rivers, ponds and lakes.
- **Turtles vs Tortoise:**
  - **Tortoises** differ from other turtles primarily by being **strictly terrestrial**, while **many turtle species are partially aquatic**.
  - Although **all tortoises are turtles**, not all turtles are tortoises. They are generally shy, solitary animals that lay eggs on land by burying them in nests.

Operation Save Kurma

- To curb the commercial exploitation of the turtles and tortoises **Operation Save Kurma was launched in 2016**, focussing on the major states related to poaching, transportation and illegal trade of live turtles and tortoises.
- The operation involved 10 States – **Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and West Bengal.**

Shaadi Anudan Yojana

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government, under the **Shaadi Anudan Yojana, provided marriage grants to 1 lakh Other Backward Classes (OBCs)** families in the financial year 2024–25 — twice the number of beneficiaries recorded in 2024.

- Despite the achievement, social audit findings and field reports **suggest that while access has improved, systemic inefficiencies persist**.

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Key Points

Shaadi Anudan Yojana (Marriage Grant Scheme)

- **About & Objective:**
  - It provides financial assistance for the marriage of daughters from poor, helpless, and **Below Poverty Line (BPL)** families belonging to the Other Backward Classes (OBC) category.
- **Eligibility Criteria:**
  - The applicants **must be from the OBCs** as recognized by the state government.
    - However, individuals from minority communities who also fall under the OBC category are **not eligible under this scheme**.
  - The age of the girl and boy **must be 18 years and 21 years** or more respectively.
  - Top priority is given in granting subsidies for the marriage of destitute widows, disabled, landless and suffered by natural disaster.
- **Grant Amount:** ₹20,000 per marriage.
  - Grants will be allowed up to a **maximum of 2 daughters** from a family.
- **Reason for the Increase in the Number of Beneficiaries:** The significant increase is primarily due to the revision of the income eligibility criteria. Previously restricted to urban and rural families BPL, **the income limit has now been raised to Rs 1 lakh**, enabling more families to avail of the scheme.
  - Furthermore, **income eligibility has been standardised for both urban and rural** beneficiaries.

Challenges Related to the Scheme

- **Delay in Disbursement:** Beneficiaries in rural districts face a **4–6 month wait** for disbursement, forcing many families to **borrow money** to cover wedding expenses.
- **Last-Mile Delivery Gaps:** According to a **2024 social audit**, only **68% of recipients** received their funds **before the wedding**, affecting the timeliness of financial support.
- **High Application Rejection Rate:** Around **23% of applications** were **rejected** due to issues with **documentation**, causing further delays and complications.
- **Verification Bottlenecks: Manual processes** and **bureaucratic delays** in verification hinder the **timely delivery** of support to beneficiaries.

Measures that Can be Taken

- The department **plans awareness campaigns to improve last-mile delivery**, acknowledging the need for streamlined processes to achieve its inclusive development goals.
- Regularly collect beneficiary feedback to identify needs and challenges, **using insights to improve and tailor the program for greater impact.**
- Establish **regular monitoring and evaluation** to assess effectiveness and areas for improvement.

Schemes Related to the Empowerment of OBCs

- **SHREYAS (Scholarships for Higher Education for Young Achievers) Scheme:** The **SHREYAS** scheme is an umbrella program consisting of four sub-schemes aimed at providing educational opportunities and financial support to economically disadvantaged Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) students.
- **PM-YASASVI (PM Young Achievers Scholarship Award Scheme for Vibrant India for OBCs and Others):** The **PM-YASASVI** scheme provides **full financial support** to students from **OBC, EBC, and Denotified, Nomadic Tribes (DNTs)** categories for higher education beyond Class XII.
  - Funded 100% by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, it covers students in institutions notified by the Ministry starting from the **2021-22** financial year.
- **OBC Pre Matric Scholarship- Uttar Pradesh:** The **OBC Pre Matric Scholarship** is designed to support students who are financially disadvantaged and pursuing secondary education in Class 9 or 10.

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UP Sets Two World Records in Infrastructure Development

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has set **two world records** in **road construction** within just **24 hours** by constructing a 10-kilometre **crash barrier** and laying 34.24 lane kilometres of **bituminous concrete road**.

- These records were officially recognized by the **Golden Book of World Records**, **Asia Book of Records**, and **Indian Book of Records**.

Key Points

Location of the Road Construction

- The construction work was carried out on the **Ganga Motorway Project between Hardoi and Unnao districts**. This motorway is part of **India's longest state-owned expressway**.

Golden Book of World Records

- The **Golden Book of World Records (GBWR)** is a global platform that helps people showcase their talents by setting or breaking records.
- It offers a simple online process, supports **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** activities, and updates records daily for easy access and recognition.

Asia Book of Records

- Asia Book of Records, **headquartered in India and Vietnam**, operates under the World Records Union and collaborates with several national record books across Asia and beyond.
- It was **founded in 2008** to recognize unique talents and unrecognized sports across Asia, creating a platform where national record holders can compete for continental recognition.
- With a **database of over 40,000 records**, it publishes an annual edition in partnership with WorldKing, distributed globally.

Indian Book of Records

- India Book of Records, **the leading authority on Indian records since 2006**, focuses on pushing human limits for individual and collective growth.
- It has been **published every year for 19 years and is the only record book to do so**, with editors from different countries.

Campaign to Eradicate Child Labour By 2027

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh government** has launched a comprehensive state-wide campaign to **eradicate child labour by 2027.**

Key Points

Campaign to Eliminate Child Labour

- The campaign **aims to raise awareness, provide education**, and support rehabilitation so that every child can access opportunities for growth and learning.
- The government will organise **special awareness programs on 12th June 2025,** aligning with the **World Day Against Child Labour,** to intensify public engagement.

Uttar Pradesh's Efforts in Bonded Labour Eradication and Child Rehabilitation

- The government has taken a **firm stand against bonded labour,** rehabilitating 1,408 individuals between 2018–19 and 2024–25.
  - These individuals have received Rs 18.17 crore in financial aid, helping them rebuild independent and dignified lives.
- **Between 2017–18 and 2024–25**, the UP government has **rehabilitated 12,426 children,** helping them to continue their education.
- The **state has provided economic assistance to 1,089 families,** ensuring they do not depend on child labour for income.
- Under the **Bal Shramik Vidya Yojana**, the government has enrolled 2,000 working children in schools.

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- The UP government launched this state-level **initiative in 2020** to **combat child labour** through a targeted, structured approach.
- The scheme seeks to **reintegrate child labourers into the formal education** system, ensuring their right to learning and a dignified future.

World Day Against Child Labour

- **About:**
  - The **World Day Against Child Labour** is observed annually on **12th June.**
  - The day aims to draw global attention to the scale of child labour and the urgent actions needed to eliminate it.
- **Global Collaboration:**
  - The day serves as a **platform to unite governments, employers' and workers' organisations**, civil society groups, and citizens from across the world.
  - It focuses on **highlighting the challenges faced by child labourers** and identifying practical solutions to end their exploitation.
- **Child Labour Eradication and the SDG Framework:**
  - The elimination of child labour is a key objective under the **UN Sustainable Development Goal (SDG)** Target 8.7.
  - SDG 8.7 calls for immediate and effective measures to:
    - Eradicate forced labour
    - End modern slavery and human trafficking
    - Prohibit and eliminate the worst forms of child labour, including the recruitment and use of child soldiers

Bonded Labour

- Bonded labour, defined by the **National Human Rights Commission of India**, is a form of **slavery called debt bondage** that has persisted for centuries.
- It is considered the **most severe form of modern slavery**, where workers are forced to work for long periods with little pay. This can include being coerced to work without pay for a specific period by an employer as a way to settle a debt.

Constitutional Provisions Related to Child Labour

- **Article 23:** It prohibits **trafficking in human beings** and forced labour, ensuring protection against exploitation and degrading work conditions.
- **Article 24:** States that a child **under 14 years cannot be employed** to perform any hazardous work.
- **Article 39:** Outlines principles that the State should follow, including ensuring equal rights to livelihood for men and women, equal pay for equal work, protection of workers' health and **children's well-being, and opportunities for children to develop** in a healthy and dignified manner

Infrastructure Development for Tourism

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government will spend ₹4,560 crore in 2025–26 to upgrade roads connecting important religious and historical sites.

- The plan covers 272 projects aimed at boosting religious tourism, improving infrastructure, and making travel easier for devotees.

Key Points

- **About the Project:**
  - **Major focus areas include: Ayodhya, Varanasi, Mathura, Chitrakoot**, Prayagraj, Naimisharanya, and Mirzapur.
    - These places are of significant religious, cultural, and mythological importance.
  - Roads selected typically witness an **average footfall of 5 lakh devotees per year.**
  - Execution will be managed jointly by the **Public Works Department (PWD)** and the **Religious Works Department**.
  - The **Principal Secretary of Religious Works Department** has approved the road strengthening efforts.

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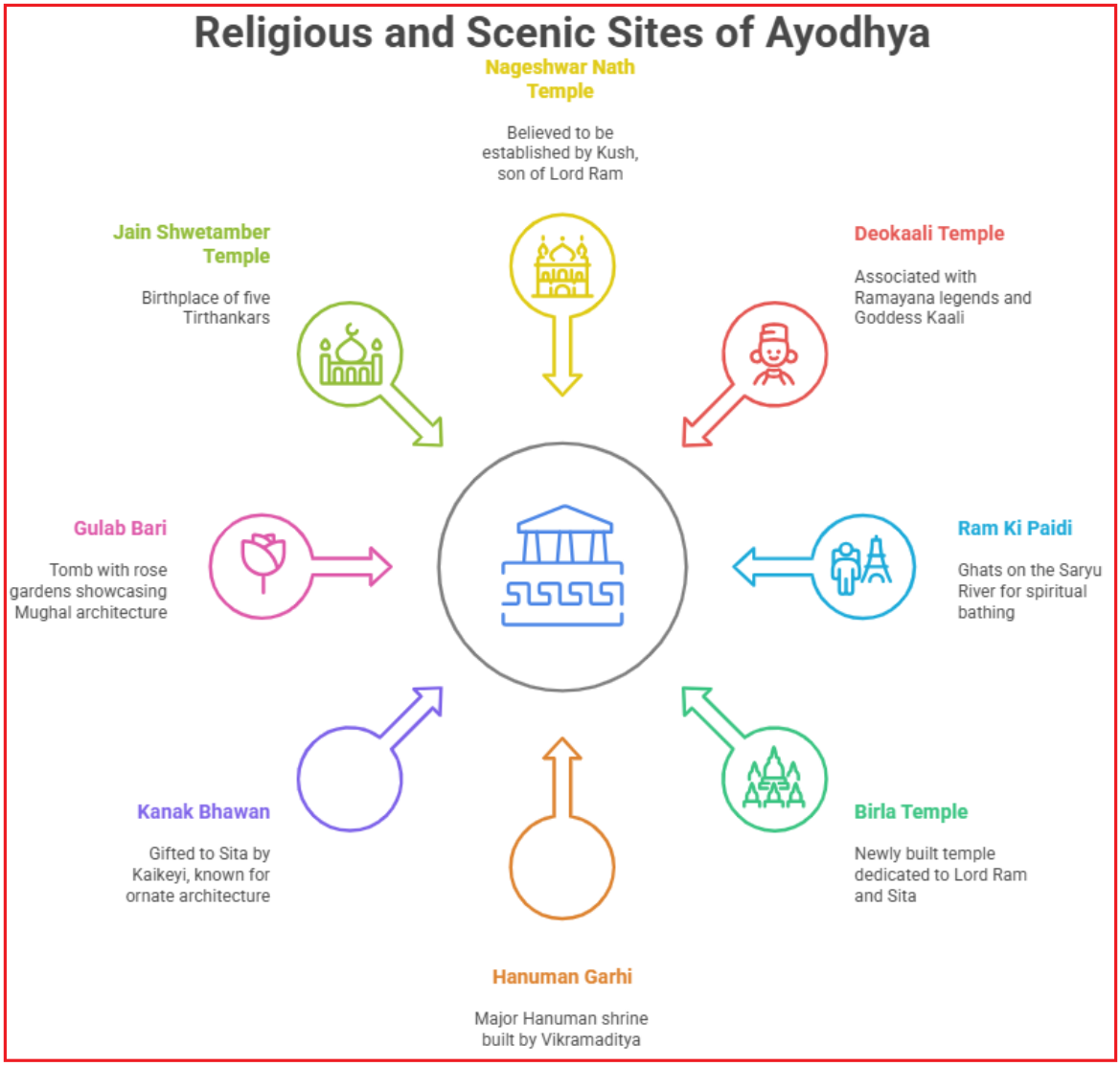
- **Land Acquisition Considerations:** Priority is given to routes that require minimal land acquisition to ensure fast-tracked implementation.
- **Key Project Features:**
  - Road widening and strengthening
  - Surface repairs and lane markings
  - Pedestrian sidewalks and carriageway upgrades
  - Beautification and expansion
  - Traffic management enhancements
  - Improved road safety standards
- **Significance:**
  - Reduced travel time and enhanced safety for pilgrims.
  - Smoother, more organized journeys for tourists and devotees.
  - Boost in religious tourism and local economic development.



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Tourist Places of Varanasi

- **Sarnath: Located 10 km northeast of Varanasi** near the confluence of the Ganges and Varuna rivers, Sarnath is a significant Buddhist site where Lord Buddha gave his first sermon.
- **Ganga Ghat:** The ghats of Varanasi are iconic riverfront steps on the banks of the Ganges. The city has 88 ghats, most of which are used for bathing and religious rituals.
- **Shree Kashi Vishvanath Temple:** One of India's most revered temples, dedicated to Lord Shiva. It is a major spiritual center and an important pilgrimage site.
- **BHU (Banaras Hindu University):** Situated in the historic city of Varanasi, also known as **Kashi or the City of Lights,** BHU is a landmark educational and spiritual hub surrounded by many important religious places.

Mathura & Vrindavan Region

- **Shri Krishna Janmbhoomi (Mathura):** The sacred site marks the birthplace of Lord Krishna, believed to **be where he manifested in a prison cell.**
- **Shri Dwarkadhish Temple (Mathura):** One of the **oldest and largest temples in Mathura**, **dedicated to Lord Krishna** in his Dwarkadhish (King of Dwarka) form.
- **Raman Reti, Gokul:** Situated near Mathura, Raman Reti (or Raman Van) is believed to be the **sacred land where young Krishna played in the sands.**
- **Shri Banke Bihari Mandir (Vrindavan):** A major Krishna **temple in Vrindavan,** known for its unique worship style and deep spiritual atmosphere. It attracts thousands of devotees daily.
- **ISKCON Temple, Vrindavan:** Also known as the Sri Krishna Balrama Mandir, this is the first temple built by the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), and a hub of Krishna devotion worldwide.
- **Shri Radha Rani Mandir (Barsana):** Located in Barsana, this temple is dedicated to Radha Rani and is a major pilgrimage site in the Braj region, drawing large crowds during festivals like Holi.

Chitrakoot

- **Ram Ghat:** A sacred ghat on the **banks of the Mandakini River where Lord Ram, Sita, and Lakshman are believed to have bathed**. It is a hub of spiritual activity, especially during festivals.
- **Kamadgiri:** A forested hill **believed to be the original Chitrakoot.** Devotees undertake a **parikrama (circumambulation)** around the hill, considering it extremely sacred.
- **Bharat Milap Mandir:** Located on **Kamadgiri Parikrama path,** this temple marks the site where Bharat met Lord Ram to persuade him to return to Ayodhya.
- **Hanuman Dhara:** A scenic **spot on a hilltop where a stream flows over a Hanuman idol.** It is believed that Lord Ram **calmed Hanuman's anger here** after the burning of Lanka.
- **Sati Anusuya Ashram:** An ancient ashram associated with the sage Atri and his wife Anusuya. It is surrounded by tranquil forests and natural springs.

Shahi Jama Masjid Dispute & Places Of Worship Act 1991

Why in News?

The **Allahabad** High Court upheld a trial court's decision to appoint an advocate commissioner to survey the Shahi Jama Masjid in Uttar Pradesh's Sambhal district.

Key Points

Shahi Jama Masjid Dispute

- **Background:** The case originated from a petition filed by local residents in a Sambhal court, claiming that the site was originally a Shri Harihar temple, which allegedly was **demolished by Mughal emperor Babur** in 1529.
- **Legal Status:** The Shahi Jama Masjid is a protected monument under the Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904. It is listed by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) as a Monument of National Importance.

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- **Shahi Jama Masjid & Places of Worship Act, 1991:** The Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, is at the center of this dispute.
  - The Act stipulates that the religious character of places of worship as they existed on **15th August 1947, must be preserved, and prohibits** any changes to the religious identity of such places.
  - The Shahi Jama Masjid dispute challenges the Act's provisions by seeking to alter the mosque's religious character.

Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991

- **About:** The Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, aims to preserve the religious status of places of worship, preventing conversions between **different religious denominations or within the same denomination.**
  - The Act seeks to **maintain communal harmony** by freezing the religious character of these places and preventing disputes over such conversions.
- **Key Provisions of the Act:**
  - **Section 3:** Prohibits the conversion of any place of worship, **either in full or in part**, from one religious denomination to another.
  - **Section 4(1):** Mandates that the religious identity of a place of worship must remain unchanged from its status on **15th August 1947**. Any attempt to alter the religious character is prohibited.
  - **Section 4(2):** Terminates all ongoing legal proceedings concerning the conversion of a place of worship's religious character prior to 15th August 1947, and prevents the initiation of new cases challenging the religious status of such places.
  - **Section 5 (Exceptions):** The specific dispute at Ayodhya (Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi), which was exempted from the Act.
    - The Act also exempted: Any place of worship which is an ancient and historical monument, or an archaeological site covered by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.
    - Cases that have already been resolved or settled by mutual agreement.
    - Conversions that occurred before the Act's commencement.
  - **Section 6 (Penalties):** The Act establishes strict penalties for violations, including imprisonment of up to three years and fines for attempting to change the religious character of a place of worship.

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

- ASI, under **the Ministry of Culture**, is the premier organisation for the archaeological research and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation.
  - **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958** governs the functioning of ASI.
- It administers more than 3650 ancient monuments, archaeological sites and remains of national importance.
  - Its activities include carrying out surveys of antiquarian remains, exploration and excavation of archaeological sites, conservation and maintenance of protected monuments etc.
- It was **founded in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham- the first Director-General of ASI.**
  - Alexander Cunningham is also known as the **"Father of Indian Archaeology"**.

86th Grandmaster Of India

Why in News?

Srihari LR of Tamil Nadu became the **86th Grandmaster (GM) of India** at the Asian Individual Men's Chess Championship 2025 in Al Ain, UAE.

Key Points

- **Srihari LR's Journey to the GM Title:**
  - Srihari earned his **first GM norm** at the **Qatar Masters in 2023**, and the **second at the Chennai GM Open in 2024.**
  - He **crossed the 2500 Elo rating in August 2024**, but it took him almost 10 months to secure the final norm.

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- The **Elo rating system** measures the relative strength of a player in some games, such as chess, compared to other players.

- **Grandmasters of India:**
  - The **first Indian Grandmaster** was Vishwanathan Anand, achieving the title in **1988.**
  - The **first Indian woman Grandmaster** was **Koneru Humpy**, who achieved the title in **2002** at the age of 15, becoming the world's youngest female Grandmaster at the time.
    - Currently, there are **three women Grandmasters in India:** Koneru Humpy, Dronavalli Harika, and R. Vaishali.
  - The **first Indian International Master was Manuel Aron in 1961**, and the **first Indian woman** to achieve the **International Master title was Jayshree Khadikar** in **1979.**

International Chess Federation (FIDE)

- **About:**
  - FIDE is the global governing body for the sport of chess.
  - It was **founded in 1924 in Paris, France.**
  - Headquartered in **Lausanne, Switzerland.**
  - It **oversees and regulates** all international chess competitions.
  - Established as a **non-governmental institution**, FIDE was officially **recognized** as a Global Sporting Organization by the **International Olympic Committee (IOC) in 1999.**
- **FIDE's Motto:**
  - **"Gens una sumus" – Latin for "We are one family"**, emphasizing unity in the global chess community.
- **Core Activities of FIDE:**
  - Issues country rankings based on the average ratings of top 10 overall players and top 10 female players.
  - Regulates rules, norms, and conduct of **all international chess tournaments**.
  - Serves as a central platform linking national chess federations worldwide.

National Action Plan for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)

Why in News?

A programme focused on the National Action Plan for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) was organised by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in Bareilly.

- It **aimed to socially and economically empower sanitation workers** and promote safe, dignified livelihoods.

Key Points

National Action Plan for Mechanized Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE)

- **About:** It is a collaborative initiative by the **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE)** and the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)**.
  - It was **launched in 2023-24** as a Central Sector Scheme with a budget allocation of 349.73 crores for the period from 2023-24 to 2025-26.
  - It primarily aims to **eliminate** manual scavenging and promote the **safety and dignity of sanitation workers**.
  - **Key Components:**
    - **SSWs** employed by Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) are to be profiled for targeted interventions.
    - SSWs receive occupational safety training, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) kits, and health insurance under Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY).
    - The scheme promotes **self-employment and formal employment** by providing **capital** subsidies to turn **SSWs** into "sanipreneurs" or sanitation entrepreneurs.

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- Waste Pickers engaged in Solid Waste Management have been included as a component under the NAMASTE scheme in 2024.

- **Objectives:**
  - To **socially and economically empower sanitation workers**, especially those engaged in hazardous sewer and septic tank cleaning.
  - To ensure workers have access to **safe, dignified, and sustainable livelihoods** by mechanizing sanitation work and reducing health risks.
  - To promote **inclusion, safety, and welfare** of workers through the distribution of PPE and healthcare benefits.

Significance of the Programme

- The programme is a vital step towards **improving the socio-economic conditions** of sanitation workers who often face hazardous working environments and social stigma.
- The emphasis on mechanization under NAMASTE reduces manual scavenging, promoting **healthier and safer work conditions**.
- Distribution of Ayushman cards under the (AB-PMJAY) ensures **access to health services**, crucial for workers exposed to occupational health risks.
- Providing sewing machines promotes **alternative livelihood opportunities**, fostering skill diversification and economic stability.
- NAMASTE aligns with the government's broader objectives of **social justice, inclusion, and welfare** for marginalized communities.
- The programme helps in achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to decent work, health, and well-being (SDGs 3 & 8).

Manual Scavenging

- Manual scavenging is defined as "the removal of human excrement from public streets and dry latrines, cleaning septic tanks, gutters and sewers".
- India banned the practice under the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013 (PEMSR).
- The Act **recognizes manual scavenging as a "dehumanizing practice"** and seeks to address the historical injustices faced by manual scavengers.

Schemes Related to Manual Scavenging

- Self Employment Scheme for Rehabilitation of Manual Scavengers (SESRM)
- National Safai Karamcharis Finance and Development Corporation (NSKFDC)
- Rashtriya Garima Abhiyaan
- Swachh Bharat Mission 2.0
- The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM)

India's First Jungle Safari Vistadome Train

Why in News?

The Indian Railways and the government of Uttar Pradesh introduced **India's first Vistadome jungle safari train**.

Key Points

Jungle Safari Vistadome Train

- **About:**
  - This initiative will connect the Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary with the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve, offering passengers a chance to experience the state's rich biodiversity.
  - At present, the service operates on weekends but plans are being firmed up to expand it to daily operations, **making it accessible to more visitors year-round**.
- **One Destination, Three Forests:**
  - This plan is part of the **"One Destination, Three Forests"** theme by the Eco Tourism Board of Uttar Pradesh.
  - It aims to bring Dudhwa National Park, Katarniaghat, and **Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary** together as **one combined tourist destination** for a richer and more connected wildlife experience.

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- **Economic Importance:**
  - The train is **expected to boost** local tourism, create new jobs, and support sustainable development.

Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary

- It is **situated in the Upper Ganga Plain**, Bahraich district, Uttar Pradesh, covering 400.6 sq km with a rich and diverse ecosystem.
- It was **established in 1975**. In 1987, it was brought under the purview of the **'Project Tiger'**, and together with the Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary and the Dudhwa National Park it forms the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve.
  - Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary **was later declared a Tiger Reserve in 2008.**
- It hosts animals like chital, deer, wild boar, tiger, elephant, and leopard, and endangered species such as **gharial**, **rhinoceros**, **Gangetic dolphin**, **swamp deer**, hispid hare, Bengal florican, and **vultures**.
- It features mixed deciduous forests of sal and teak, grasslands, swamps, and **wetlands**, with the Girwa River maintaining ecosystem balance.

Dudhwa Tiger Reserve

- Located in the **Terai region of Uttar Pradesh on the Indo-Nepal border**, within Lakhimpur-Kheri district.
- Known for its rich biodiversity, **it is home to Bengal tiger**, Indian rhinoceros, swamp deer, leopard, and many bird species.

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- Part of the Terai Arc Landscape (TAL), which includes:
  - Dudhwa National Park
  - Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary
  - Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary
- These **three areas form the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve under Project Tiger**, protecting the last viable population of Royal Bengal Tigers in the state.
- Dudhwa National Park and Kishanpur Sanctuary **joined the reserve in 1987, and Katarniaghat joined in 2000**.

New Products Added in One District One Product

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government **included 12 new products** under **the One District One Product (ODOP)** scheme.

Key Points

- **About One District One Product Scheme:**
  - This scheme was launched by the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh on **24 January 2018.**
  - Under this, **specific and traditional products of each district of the state are identified** and given a Geographical **Indication (GI) tag , which certifies that the products belong to a particular region.**
  - The state government provides **financial assistance**, **group marketing facilities and other resources to the entrepreneurs to get** these products recognized in **the national and international markets.**
  - The major objectives of the scheme include:
    - Creation of new employment opportunities in the state
    - To boost the exports of the state
    - To contribute towards making **Uttar Pradesh a trillion dollar economy by the year 2029**
  - **Till now 62 products were listed** under this scheme , but after adding **12 new products this number has increased to 74.**
- **The 12 new products that have been added are:**
  - **Baghpat** – Agricultural machinery and related equipment
  - **Saharanpur** - Hosiery Products
  - **Firozabad** – Food Processing **Ghaziabad** – Metal, Textiles & Apparels
  - **Amroha** – Metal and Wooden Handicrafts
  - **Agra** - Petha industry and all kinds of footwear
  - **Hamirpur** - Metal Products
  - **Bareilly** - Wood Products
  - **Etta** - Chicory Product
  - **Pratapgarh** – Food Processing
  - **Bijnor** – Brushes and related products
  - **Ballia** – Sattu Products

Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

- A Geographical Indication (GI) tag is a **name or mark used on special products** that belong to a specific geographical location or origin.
- The GI tag ensures that only **authorised users or people residing in the geographical region** are allowed to use the name of a popular product.
- It also protects the product from being copied or imitated by others.
  - A registered GI tag is **valid for 10 years.**
- GI registration is overseen by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.**
- **Legal Framework:**
  - It is regulated and guided by the WTO Agreement on **Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).**

India's Largest Titanium and Superalloy Plant

Why in News?

Union **Defence Minister** and **Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister** inaugurated India 's largest **Titanium and Superalloy Materials Plant in Lucknow.**

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Key Points

- **About the Plant:**
  - This **titanium plant** is operated by Aeroalloy Technologies Limited, a subsidiary of PTC Industries Limited.
  - The plant is spread over an area of **50 acres and has an annual production capacity of 6,000 tonnes** , making it the **world's largest single-site titanium remelting facility.**
  - The state-of-the-art technologies being used at this plant include:
    - **Vacuum arc remelting (VAR)**
    - **Electron Beam (EB)**
    - **Plasma Arc Melting (PAM)**
    - **Vacuum Induction Melting (VIM)**
  - These technologies will make domestic production of **aerospace-grade materials** possible.
- Along with the titanium plant, the foundation stone of **seven additional advanced facilities** was also laid. Prominent among them are:
  - **Aerospace Precision Casting Plants** : Which make single crystal castings, which are important for jet engines.
  - **Aerospace Forge Shop and Mill Products Plant:** The need for manufacturing critical materials such as billets, bars and plates will be eliminated.
  - **Aerospace Precision Machining Shop:** which provides capability for ready-to-assemble ultra-precision CNC machined components.
- The project is being developed under the **Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor**, which aims to promote **self-reliance in defence production.**

Titanium

- Its symbol Ti and atomic number 22, known for its high strength-to-weight ratio, excellent corrosion resistance, and ability to withstand high temperatures.
- It is a light and strong metal. It is as **strong as steel, but much lighter than that**.
- Titanium is the preferred material for making underwater objects because it can withstand heavy water pressure even at great depths and does not rust.
- Titanium metal is used in making alloys with aluminium, molybdenum, manganese, iron and other metals. These alloys of titanium are used in **the aviation industry.**
- Titanium is a component of joint replacement parts, including the hip ball and socket.
- Titanium is also used in **dental implants.**

Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor

- It is an ambitious project aimed at reducing the foreign dependency of **the Indian aerospace and defence sector.**
- It will have 6 nodes – Aligarh, Agra, Kanpur, Chitrakoot, Jhansi and Lucknow.
- **Uttar Pradesh Expressway Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA)** was made **the nodal agency** to execute the project in collaboration with various state agencies.
- The aim of this corridor is **to establish the state as one of the largest and advanced defence manufacturing hubs** and put it on the world map.
  - **Defence Corridor** refers to a route or path used by **public sector, private sector** and **micro, small and medium enterprises** for domestic production of defence equipment as well as to enhance equipment/operational capabilities of the defence forces.

Gomti River

Why in News?

Environmental experts and citizens have raised concerns about **the Gomti River,** as it struggles with plummeting oxygen levels, **high fecal coliform** counts, and a heavy load of **untreated sewage.**

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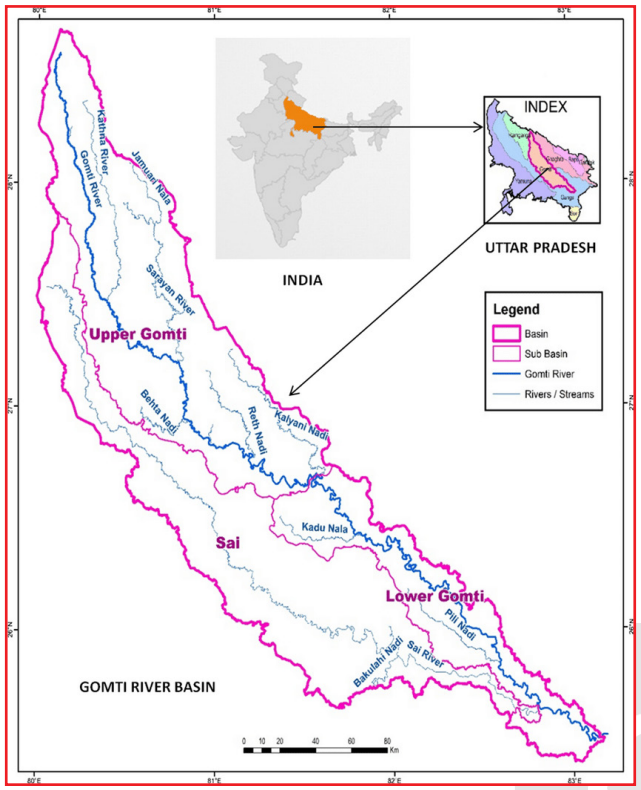

Key Points

- **River Profile:**
  - Gomti is a 960-km long tributary of **the Ganga River**.
  - It **originates from Madho Tanda in Pilibhit district** and **merges with the Ganga** at Kaithi **in Ghazipur.**
  - In Lucknow, the river faces increasing threats from urbanisation, including low oxygen levels and rising faecal contamination.
- **Urbanisation Pressure and Sewage Burden:**
  - Rapid population growth and city expansion are straining Gomti's ecological balance.
  - The city currently treats 450 MLD out of 730 MLD needed; around 280 MLD of untreated sewage flows directly into the river.
- **Mega Township Projects:**
  - The **Lucknow Development Authority (LDA)** is planning four major projects: Wellness City, IT City, Educational City, and Prabandhnagar.
  - Other key developments include Anant Nagar (Mohaan Road) and Aero City (Amausi Airport).
  - These townships lie along major corridors and will further increase population density and sewage load on Gomti.
- **Need for Sustainable Urban Planning:**
  - Environmentalists stress the urgency of scientific urban planning, including **integrated drainage**, **green spaces**, **Sewage Treatment Plants**, **and water reuse systems.**
- **Public Health Concerns:**
  - Sharp rise in faecal coliform levels and falling oxygen in the river present serious health and ecological risks.
  - Untreated discharge from nullahs and inadequate infrastructure pose a threat to both aquatic life and human health.

MoU Between CIL and UPRVUNL

Why in News?

Coal India Limited (CIL) and **Uttar Pradesh Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam Limited (UPRVUNL)** have signed **a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** to set up **a solar power project** in the state.

Key Points

- **About the MoU:**
  - This agreement is part of CIL's **strategic initiative in the green energy sector.**
    - It is a strong step towards meeting the **rapidly growing energy demand of Uttar Pradesh.**
  - This **is a non-binding agreement** with **the aim** of setting up **a solar power project of 500 MW capacity** within Uttar Pradesh.
- **Solar Energy:**
  - Solar energy, known as energy obtained from the sun, is a clean and **renewable energy** source. It is harnessed through solar technology, which is mainly of two types:
    - **Solar Thermal**: In this the heat of the sun is used to heat water.
    - **Solar Photovoltaic (PV)**: It uses the photovoltaic effect to convert the sun's rays into electrical energy.

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- **Uses:**
  - Solar technologies are scalable and flexible, capable of powering entire cities through solar farms.
  - Electricity can be supplied even to remote areas through decentralized systems.
  - Homes and commercial buildings can be provided with energy by installing solar panels on rooftops.
- **Example** : Cochin International Airport is one such example where solar energy is being used effectively.
  - Importance:
    - Reduction in **dependence on fossil fuels.**
    - Reducing **carbon emissions.**
    - Improvement in **air quality.**
    - Promote **energy access and security.**

Coal India Limited (CIL)

- **Introduction:** CIL is a government-owned **coal mining company in India**, responsible for production and management of coal resources in the country.
  - It was **established in 1975** and is the world's largest coal producing mining company.
- **Organisational Structure:** CIL is classified as a 'Maharatna' public sector enterprise. It operates through 8 subsidiaries like **Eastern Coalfields Limited (ECL), Bharat Coking Coal Limited (BCCL).**
  - **Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL)** is the largest coal producing subsidiary of CIL.
- **Strategic Importance:** More than half of India's installed power capacity is coal-based, with CIL supplying about 78% of the country's total coal production.
  - Coal also contributes 40% to India's primary commercial energy needs.
- **Mining Capacity:** CIL operates in 84 mining areas across eight Indian states and manages a total of 313 active mines.

Uttar Pradesh State Power Generation Corporation Limited (UPRVUNL)

- It is a thermal power generation undertaking wholly owned by the state government, which operates five thermal power plants located in different areas of the state.
- It was formed on 25 August 1980 under the **Companies Act, 1956** to construct new thermal power projects in the state.
- The first project constructed by the corporation was **Unchahar Thermal Power Station** (2x210 MW) , which was handed over to NTPC on 13 February 1992.
- Later, under the **Uttar Pradesh State Electricity Reform Act 1999** and **Uttar Pradesh Transfer Scheme 2000**, Uttar Pradesh State Electricity Board was reorganized and divided into three public sector undertakings:
  - Uttar Pradesh State Electricity Generation Corporation Limited (for electricity generation)
  - Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (for electricity distribution)
  - Uttar Pradesh Power Transmission Corporation Limited (for electricity transmission).

Chip Design Center Launched in Noida

Why in News?

The **Union Minister** of **Electronics and Information Technology** inaugurated India's first **3-nanometer (3nm) chip design centre in Noida,** Uttar Pradesh.

Key Points

- **Achievement of 3nm technology:**
  - This technology is much more advanced than the existing 7nm and 5nm.
  - This enables **higher performance, lower energy consumption, and greater computing efficiency.**
  - It represents the pinnacle of innovation at the design level, which is now being realised in India.
  - This centre has been established by **Renesas Electronics India**, a company of Japanese origin.

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- **Supporting the Government Strategy**:
  - This initiative is part of **the Indian government's** broader strategy to develop the semiconductor ecosystem.
  - The government is looking to empower **the semiconductor ecosystem** by incorporating design, manufacturing, **ATMP (Assembly, Testing, Marking, Packaging)** and supply of related equipment.
  - It is being implemented under **India's Semiconductor Mission** and **Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme.**
- **Global recognition and confidence** :
  - India's semiconductor capabilities are being appreciated at global forums like **the World Economic Forum (Davos).**
  - This has increased the confidence of **international companies and investors** towards India.

India's Semiconductor Mission (ISM)

- **Introduction:**
  - ISM was **launched in 2021** under the aegis of the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)** with a total financial outlay of Rs.76,000 crore.
  - This is part of a comprehensive programme to develop a sustainable semiconductor and display ecosystem in the country.
  - The objective of this program is to provide financial support to companies investing in the semiconductor, display manufacturing and design ecosystem.
  - It is envisaged that ISM will act as the nodal agency for efficient, consistent and smooth implementation of the schemes under the leadership of global experts from the semiconductor and display industry.
- **Ingredients:**
  - Plans to set up semiconductor fabs in India:
    - It provides financial assistance to eligible applicants for setting up **semiconductor fab (manufacturing plant)** with the aim of attracting investments for setting up semiconductor wafer fabrication facilities in the country.

- **Semiconductor chips:**
  - It is a small electronic device made from a **semiconductor (silicon or germanium)**, which serves as the basic building block of most electronic circuits.
  - These chips can contain billions of microscopic switches on a chip smaller than a fingernail.
  - The basic component of a semiconductor chip is a **silicon wafer** built of tiny transistors , which control electric current according to various computational instructions.
  - It performs various functions, such as processing data , storing information or controlling electronic devices.
  - They are a vital part of almost every modern electronic device, including smartphones, computers, and integrated circuits.

New UPSC Chairman Appointed

Why in News?

Former Defence Secretary Dr. Ajay Kumar has been appointed **the new Chairman** of **the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).**

Key Points

- **Union Public Service Commission**
  - The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) is a **constitutional body**. Part XIV of the Indian Constitution contains provisions relating to the composition, appointment and removal, powers and functions of its members under **Articles 315 to 323.**
  - **Appointment of Members:** The Chairman and other members of the UPSC are appointed by the **President of India.**
  - **Office:** Any member of the UPSC will hold office for a **term of six years or until the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.**
  - **Re-appointment:** No person who has once held office as a member of a Public Service Commission shall be eligible for reappointment to his office.

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- **Resignation:** A member of the Union Public Service Commission may resign from his office by writing to the President of India.
- **Removal/Suspension of Members:** The Chairman or any other member of the Union Public Service Commission shall be removed from his office only by order of the President of India.
  - The President may also suspend the Chairperson or any other Member before the completion of his office, in respect of which a reference is made to **the Supreme Court.**
- **Removal:** The Chairman or any other member of the UPSC may be removed if he:
  - has been declared bankrupt.
  - Engages in any paid employment outside the duties of the office during his term of office.
  - is, in the opinion of the President, unfit to continue in office by reason of infirmity of mind or body.
- **Regulating the conditions of service:** Power of the President of India in the case of UPSC:
  - Determines the number of members of the Commission and their conditions of service.
  - Makes provision for the number of employees of the Commission and their conditions of service.
- **Restriction on Powers:** The service conditions of members of the UPSC shall not be amended in any manner after their appointment.
- **Power to extend functions:** The Legislature of a State may make provision for the exercise of additional functions by the UPSC or the SPSC in respect of the services of the Union or a State and in respect of the services of any local authority or other body corporate constituted by law or any public institution.
- **Expenses:** The expenses of the UPSC, including salaries, allowances and pensions of members or employees of the Commission, are met from the Consolidated **Fund of India.**

- **Submission of Reports:** The UPSC submits an annual report of the work done by the Commission to the President of India.
  - A memorandum has to be submitted to the President in respect of those cases in which the advice of the Commission has not been accepted.
    - The **reasons for rejection will have to be presented before each House** of Parliament before being presented to the President.

Brahmos Missile

Why in News?

BrahMos supersonic cruise missile production unit was inaugurated by the Union Defence Minister **in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.**

Key Points

- **About Brahmos Missile:**
  - An Indo-Russian joint venture, the BrahMos missile **has a range of 290 km and** is **the world's fastest cruise missile** with a top speed of Mach 2.8 (about three times the speed of sound).
    - It is named after **the Brahmaputra River** of India and **the Moskva River of Russia.**
  - It is a two-stage **(solid propellant engine in the first stage and liquid ramjet in the second)** missile.
  - It is a multiplatform missile which **can be launched with great accuracy from land, air and sea having multi-capability capabilities** and can operate during day and night despite bad weather.

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- It operates on the "fire and forget" principle i.e. it does not require guidance after launch.

- **About Lucknow Brahmos Unit:**
  - The unit has been set up under **the** Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor (UP DIC) at a cost of **Rs 300 crore.**
  - It is **a joint venture between** the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) of the Government of India and the Russian company **NPOM.**
    - India has a share of **50.5%** and Russia has a share of **49.5% in it.**
  - **In the first phase, parts** of the BrahMos missile will be assembled here and later **the full manufacturing** work will be started.
  - The unit will manufacture **100 to 150 next-generation missiles per year.**
  - The new version's weight has been **reduced from 2,900 kg to 1,290 kg.**
  - Its range will be **more than 300 km.**

Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor

- It is an ambitious project aimed at **reducing the foreign dependency** of the Indian **aerospace and defence sector.**
- It has **6 nodes** – Aligarh, Agra, Kanpur, Chitrakoot, Jhansi and Lucknow.
- Uttar Pradesh Expressway Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA) has been made the **nodal agency** to execute the project in collaboration with various state agencies.
- The aim of this corridor is to **establish the state as one of the largest and advanced defence manufacturing hubs** and put it on the world map.

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)

- **Introduction:**
  - DRDO was **established in 1958** by merging the Indian Army's **Technical Development Establishment (TDE), Directorate of Technical Development and Production (DTDP)** and **Defence Science Organisation (DSO).**
  - DRDO is the research and development wing of the **Ministry of Defence, Government of India.**
  - Initially DRDO had 10 laboratories, currently it operates 41 laboratories and **5 DRDO Young Scientist Laboratories (DYSL).**
- **Principle:**
  - The guiding principle of DRDO is **"Balasya Mulam Vijnanam" (power lies in science),** which guides the nation in both peace and war situations.
- **Mission:**
  - Its mission is to achieve **self-reliance in critical defence technologies** and systems by equipping the Indian Armed Forces with state-of-the-art weapon systems and equipment as per the requirements of the three services.

UP-AGREES and AI Pragya Programme

Why in News?

The **Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh** launched the **'UP-AGREES'** and **'AI Pragya'** programmes **in Lucknow** in the presence of **the World Bank President.**

Key Points

- **About UP-AGREES:**
  - **It** will be implemented in **28 districts** of **Purvanchal and Bundelkhand** regions of Uttar Pradesh.
  - Its **main objective** is to increase agricultural productivity, ensure **conservation of natural resources and increase the income of farmers.**
  - The Rs 3,900 crore project includes a Rs 2,737 crore World Bank loan and RS 1,166 crore from the state government.
  - The 6-year loan, repayable over **35 years at 1.23% interest,** will benefit 10 lakh farmers—30% of them women.
  - The project will link **10,000 women producer groups** and send **500 farmers abroad for advanced training.**

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- **AI Pragya Program:**
  - **The main objective of the 'AI Pragya'** program is to establish Uttar Pradesh as **a leading state** in the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and digital technologies.
  - Under this program, **10 lakh youth** will be provided **training** and **certification** in cutting-edge technologies like **AI, machine learning, data analytics** and **cyber security.**
  - This initiative will promote **AI based startups in the state, increase employment opportunities** and create **a digitally skilled workforce.**
  - The programme will be conducted in **collaboration with** various state departments like **Education, Health, Agriculture, Revenue, Secretariat Administration.**

World Bank

- **About:**
  - It was **established in 1944** as the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** along with the IMF. The IBRD later became the World Bank.
  - The World Bank Group is a **unique global partnership of five institutions working** to advance lasting solutions that reduce poverty and build shared prosperity in developing countries.
  - The World Bank is one of the specialized agencies of **the United Nations.**
- **Member:**
  - **189 countries** are its members.
  - **India** is also its **member.**
- **Five Development Institutions:**
  - International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)
  - International Development Association (IDA)
  - International Finance Corporation (IFC)
  - Multilateral Guarantee Agency (MIGA)
  - International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)
  - India is not a member of ICSID.

Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission (UPSDM)

Why in discussion?

Under Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission (UPSDM), the UP government signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **the** Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Roorkee to provide **world-class technical skills** to the youth of the state.

Key Points

- **About the MoU:**
  - Through this agreement , technical collaboration has been established between **the State Government and IIT Roorkee with the aim of** equipping **the youth with cutting-edge technical skills.**
  - The youth will get the following facilities under the guidance of **experts from IIT Roorkee :**
    - Advanced Technical Training
    - Innovation-Driven Education
    - Research opportunities
    - Startup Support & Consulting
  - This initiative will enable the youth **to compete** at **the national and international level** , thereby strengthening their **employability.**

Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission (UPSDM)

- Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission was established on **September 13, 2013** as a society registered under **the** Societies Registration Act, 1860 under the **Department of Vocational Education & Skill Development, Government of Uttar Pradesh.**
- A **National Skill Development Policy** was launched **in 2009** with a target **to skill 500 million people by 2022**.
  - Under the national scheme, the **state of Uttar Pradesh** aims to **skill over 4 million youth** by the end of the 12th Five Year Plan.

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- UPSDM has been established to achieve this goal and provide employable skills to the youth of the state.
- It is essential to coordinate all skill development initiatives by leveraging the **State Skill Development Policy.**
- It empanelled private training partners besides government training partners to conduct skill development training.

Meerut Tops in GST Collection

Why in News?

In **April 2025 , Meerut Zone of Uttar Pradesh** secured **first place** in the state in **GST collection** under the State Tax Department.

Key Points

- **About GST Collection:**
  - **According to the state tax department portal**, GST collection by Meerut zone in April 2024 was Rs 147.34 crore, while **the target for April 2025** was set at Rs 287.08 crore.
    - **Meerut Zone** achieved a major part of the target by collecting revenue of **Rs 211.87 crore in April this year**.
  - **The Excise Department** also made a significant contribution to the revenue, with **liquor sales earning Rs 103 crore in April 2025 , which** is **Rs 42.04 crore more than Rs 78.96 crore** received last year (April 2024).
    - This success has been possible due to **increasing tax compliance, awareness among traders, improvements in ITC rules** and strengthening of **digital monitoring systems.**
    - **The expansion of industries such as telecommunications, manufacturing, education and the service sector** has fueled this accumulation.
- **Others:**
  - **Lucknow's Corporate Circle Headquarters** remained at the **second position** in the state.
  - **Gautam Buddha Nagar**, **Lucknow Second Zone** and **Bareilly Zone** remained at the third, fourth and fifth positions respectively.

Goods and Services Tax

- **Introduction:** GST is a value added tax system levied on the supply of goods and services in India.
  - It is a comprehensive indirect tax which was implemented in India on July 1, 2017 through the **101st Constitutional Amendment Act, 2016** with the slogan **'One Nation One Tax'.**
- **Benefits of GST:**
  - **Simplified tax regime:** GST replaced several indirect taxes, making compliance easier and reducing paperwork for businesses.
  - **Increased Transparency:** The online GST portal simplifies tax administration and promotes transparency in the system.
  - **Reduction in tax burden:** The elimination of cascading taxes benefits consumers as prices are lower.
  - **Boost economic growth:** By removing tax barriers and improving efficiency, GST is expected to contribute to higher economic growth and job creation.
- **GST Council:** The GST Council is a constitutional body responsible for making recommendations on issues relating to the implementation of GST in India.
  - The GST Council was **constituted by the President** as per **Article 279A (1)** of the amended Constitution.

Veer Rath Park

Why in News?

Veer Rath Park, along with a museum and open-air theatre, will be **developed in Noida, Uttar Pradesh** to honour the heroes of the **freedom struggle.**

Key Points

- **About the park:**
  - This park is being established in **Nalgarh village** near Noida-Greater Noida Expressway with the aim of preserving and showcasing **the legacy of 32 freedom fighters.**

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- Historically, **Nalgarh village** has been the **refuge of** Shaheed **Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, Sukhdev, Subhash Chandra Bose** and **Colonel Karnail Singh of the Azad Hind Fauj.**
- It is believed that these fighters stayed here and prepared **strategies to attack the British army.**

- **This park will be** established on approximately **22 acres of land**, with an estimated cost of **Rs 42 crore.**
- The park will also have a **museum** that will house **stone statues of** freedom fighters along with **informational exhibits.**
  - **Stories of freedom fighters and army personnel** will also be inscribed on the walls of the museum.
- Wartime tanks and fighter jets will symbolically showcase **India's military heritage,** while a laser show will inspire patriotism. An open-air theatre will host **cultural programmes** themed on **India's independence.**

Azad Hind Fauj (INA)

- **Introduction:** It was a **military force** formed with the **aim of countering British rule** in India during the **Second World War** and played an important role in **India's freedom struggle.**
- Formation:
  - **Mohan Singh:** He proposed raising an army from **Indian prisoners of war (POWs)** and received Japanese support. He initially led the INA, recruiting about 40,000 soldiers.
    - However, conflict with the Japanese over the number of troops led to their removal.
  - **Rashbehari Bose:** He was an experienced revolutionary and played an important role in garnering support for the INA and formed the **Indian Independence League in Tokyo (1942).**
  - **Subhas Chandra Bose:** On **25 August 1943**, Bose was appointed **Supreme Commander of the INA** and later on 21 October 1943 , he established the **Provisional Government of Free India** or Azad Hind **in Singapore.**
    - It was ratified by **nine countries,** including Japan, Germany, Italy , and China (led by Wang Jingwei).

Mission Shakti

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh government's Mission Shakti campaign** has set a new benchmark in **women empowerment** by reaching over 9 crore women across the state.

Key Points

- **About Mission Shakti Campaign** :
  - **'Mission Shakti' is an ambitious multi-dimensional scheme** of the Uttar Pradesh Government aimed at ensuring **safety, dignity and self-reliance** of women and girls.
  - It was launched on **17 October 2020** and till now this campaign has been completed in **five phases.**
- **Achievements and Statistics** :
  - **1,707 potential child marriages** were prevented, ensuring the protection of the rights of girls.
  - **Women Helpline 1090 has** successfully resolved **7.78 lakh cases** so far.
  - **One Stop Centres** provided relief in **more than 2.10 lakh cases** of violence and abuse.
  - Through **the Chief Minister Kanya Sumangala Yojana,** benefits were provided to **23.40 lakh girls.**
  - More than 2 lakh girls were identified **in the aspiring districts and** were given assistance for their **overall development.**
- **Investing in security infrastructure**:
  - **100 pink police booths** have been set up in the state.
  - **The 1090 call centre** has been expanded with **80 additional terminals.**
  - **More than 1,100 pink toilets** have been constructed in **189 urban bodies.**

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- Outreach has been done to **villages, schools, colleges and urban wards** through special events, training sessions and campaigns.
- Workshops have been organised on **cyber crime, domestic violence, mental health, legal rights, financial literacy.**

Chief Minister Kanya Sumangala Scheme

- **Introduction:**
  - It was launched in **April 2019** by the **Women Welfare Department** in Uttar Pradesh.
  - Under the scheme, **financial assistance of Rs. 15,000** is given to the family when a girl child is born in the family.
  - This amount is given as an incentive in six phases, from the birth of the daughter till she graduates.
  - Maximum two daughters from a family can get benefit of this scheme.
- **Objective:**
  - The main objectives of the scheme are elimination of **female foeticide , prevention of child marriage**, increase in health and education and promotion of self-reliance.

Global Service Centre in UP

Why in News?

To attract global investment, the **Uttar Pradesh government** has approved the Global Capability Centres (GCC) Policy.

Key Points

- **About the Policy:**
  - The policy aims to drive UP toward its ambitious **goal of becoming a USD 1-trillion economy.**
  - Officials expect the policy to attract global players in **IT, banking, healthcare, engineering, and next-generation technologies.**
  - The policy offers attractive incentives and has been framed after studying global best practices.
- **Technologies Covered by GCCs:**
  - GCCs being set up in UP include cutting-edge domains such as:
    - Artificial Intelligence (AI)
    - Machine Learning
    - Cloud Computing
    - Cybersecurity
    - Robotic Process Automation
    - Engineering design and development
- **Sectors and Companies Already on Board:**
  - **Global firms** in banking, financial services, insurance, automotive, electronics, and semiconductor manufacturing have **begun operations in UP.**
  - **Microsoft** has laid the foundation for a 10,000-seater **development centre in Noida.**
  - **MAQ Software** has set up a 3,000-seater engineering centre.
  - The state is also working to **attract GCCs to Varanasi, Kanpur, and Prayagraj, alongside Noida and NCR.**

Global Capability Centers (GCCs)

- GCCs represent **offshore establishments set up by companies** to deliver a range of services to their parent entities.
- Operating as internal entities within the global corporate framework, these centres **offer specialised capabilities including IT services, research and development**, customer support, and various other business functions.
- GCCs play a crucial role in **capitalising on cost efficiencies, tapping into talent reservoirs**, and fostering collaboration between parent enterprises and their offshore counterparts.
- **Special Economic Zones (SEZs) can provide a fertile ground for GCCs** to flourish by offering several advantages like tax breaks, simplified regulations and streamlined bureaucracy.

Piprahwa Relics

Why in News?

The Central Government has launched a **strong**

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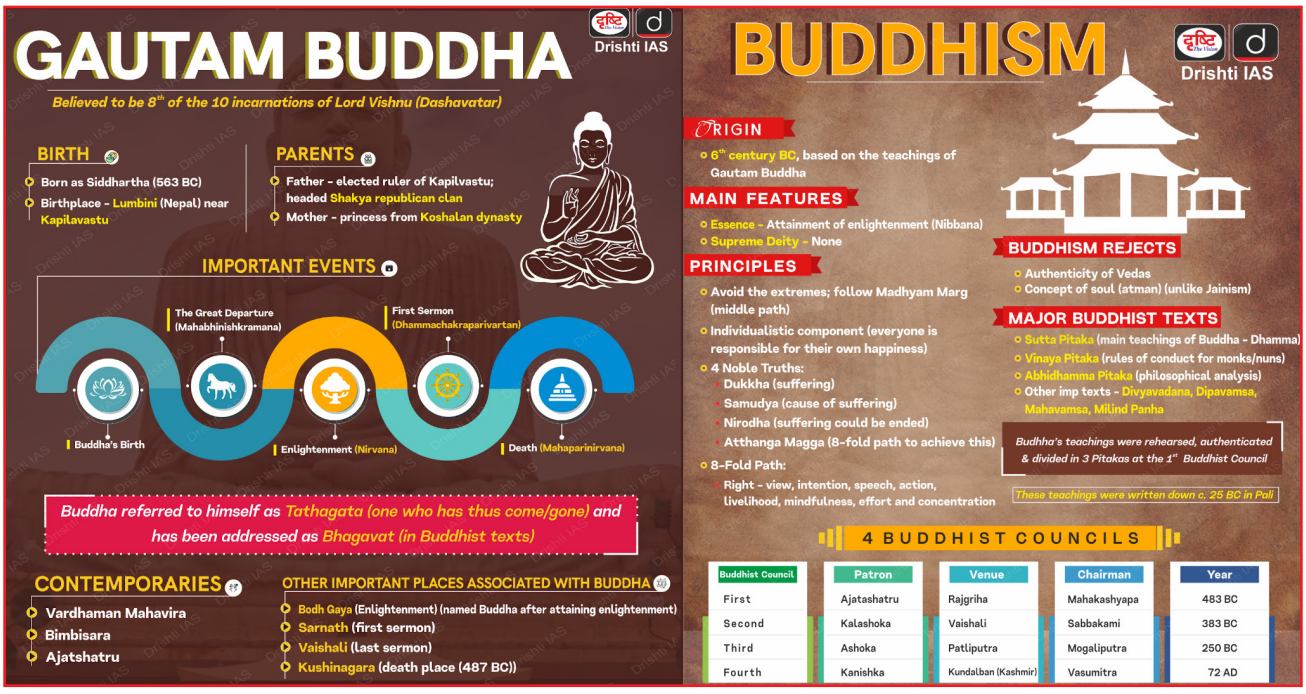
diplomatic and legal campaign to stop Sotheby's in Hong Kong from **auctioning the sacred Piprahwa Relics**, which are believed to be the **remains of Lord Buddha**.

Key Points

- **About Piprahwa Relics:**
  - Excavators **discovered the Piprahwa Relics in 1898** at the **Piprahwa Stupa in Uttar Pradesh**, believed to be **ancient Kapilavastu,** the birthplace of Lord Buddha.
  - The relics include **bone fragments, crystal caskets, gold ornaments, and other ritual offerings.**
  - An inscription in **Brahmi script** on one casket links the relics directly to Lord Buddha, stating they were deposited by **the Sakya clan**.



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- **Legal Protection of the Relics:**
  - India classifies the relics as **'AA' antiquities**, granting them the **highest level of legal protection** under national law.
  - Indian law **prohibits their sale or export,** making any attempt to auction or remove them illegal.
  - While **most relics were handed to** the **Indian Museum, Kolkata in 1899, descendants of British excavator William Claxton Peppé retained some relics,** now surfacing in the auction market.
- **India's Immediate Action:**
  - After learning of the proposed Sotheby's auction in Hong Kong, the Ministry of Culture issued a legal notice demanding an immediate halt.
  - The **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** contacted India's Consulate General in Hong Kong to seek intervention.

Kapilavastu Relics

- The discovery of an **inscribed casket in 1898** at the stupa site in **Piprahwa** (near UP's Siddharthnagar) helped identify the place with the ancient Kapilavastu.
- The inscription on the casket's lid refers to the relics of **Buddha and his community, the Sakya.**
- A further excavation of the stupa by the Archaeological Survey of India in 1971-77 brought to light **two more steatite relic caskets**, containing a total of 22 sacred bone relics, which are now under the care of the National Museum.
- This was followed by the discovery of more than 40 terracotta sealings from different levels and spots in the eastern monastery at Piprahwa, establishing that Piprahwa was the ancient Kapilavastu.

Uttar Pradesh Gramin Bank

Why in News?

Aryavart Bank, Prathama Bank, and Baroda UP Bank—three **regional rural banks** in Uttar Pradesh—have been merged into a single entity, named **'Uttar Pradesh Gramin Bank'.**

Key Points

- **About Uttar Pradesh Gramin Bank :**
  - The objective of this bank is to ensure **financial inclusion** , **integrated management** and **better customer services** in rural areas.
  - This new bank came into existence from **1st May 2025** under the notification of **the Ministry of Finance, Government of India.**
  - The jurisdiction of this newly formed bank will extend to 26 districts of Uttar Pradesh, in which operations will be carried out through a total of 22 regional offices.
  - The headquarters of this newly formed bank will be established in **Lucknow and it** will be operated under the sponsorship of **Bank of Baroda.**
- **Benefits:**
  - **Ease in loan disbursal** : Quick loan approval to farmers, self-employed rural entrepreneurs.
  - **Expansion of digital services** : Facilities like mobile banking, **Unified Payments Interface (UPI),** net banking will reach remote villages.
  - **Monitoring of Facilities** : A special committee has been formed by **NABARD which will assess the convenience of the customers.**

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)

- NABARD is a development bank that primarily **focuses on the rural areas of the country.** It is the **apex banking institution** for **providing finance for agriculture and rural development.**
- Its **headquarters is located in Mumbai,** the financial capital of the country.
- Apart from agriculture, it is responsible for the development of small industries, cottage industries and rural projects.
- It is a statutory body established in the year 1982 under the **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Act, 1981.**

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Ration Card for Transgenders

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has announced a **special drive** to issue **ration cards** to **transgender citizens** under **the National Food Security Act (NFSA).**

Key Points

- **Status of Transgender Community:**
  - The Government was informed through the report by the **Uttar Pradesh Transgender Welfare Board** that a large number of **transgender persons are deprived of permanent employment and government schemes.**
  - Due to social discrimination they are also **deprived of basic facilities like food security, pension, health services.**
- **Intervention of Chief Minister** :
  - Taking cognizance of this report, the **Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh** has directed that:
    - The ration card distribution process should be made **simple, fast and transparent.**
    - This work should be completed before the launch of the state's **'Zero Poverty' programme.**
    - All districts have been instructed to **identify transgender persons who do not have ration cards and issue them documents.**
    - These beneficiaries should be added to the ' **eligible household ' category and** brought under **the** National Food Security Act (NFSA).
- **Importance:**
  - This will promote **social inclusion and** provide **equal rights and dignity** to the transgender community.
  - By ensuring **food security , their economic condition** will be strengthened.
  - **Administrative reforms** and transparency will make the reach of **welfare schemes** more effective.

National Food Security Act (NFSA) 2013

- **Notified:** September 10, 2013
- **Objective:** It aims to provide food and nutrition security to the people by providing them with an adequate quantity of good quality food at affordable prices to lead a dignified life.
- **Coverage:** 75% of rural population and 50% of urban population eligible to receive subsidized food grains under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS).
- The National Food Security Act (NFSA) overall covers 67 per cent of the country's total population.
- **Eligibility:**
  - Priority households covered under Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS), as per State Government guidelines.
  - Houses covered under Antyodaya Anna Yojana.
- **Provision:**
  - 5 kg food grains per person per month, including rice at Rs 3 per kg, wheat at Rs 2 per kg and coarse grains at Rs 1 per kg.
  - However, under the Antyodaya Anna Yojana, the existing provision of 35 kg foodgrains per family per month will continue.
  - There is a provision to provide maternity benefit of at least Rs 6000 to pregnant women and lactating mothers in addition to food during pregnancy and six months after the birth of the child.
  - Food for children upto 14 years of age.
  - Food security allowance to the beneficiaries in case of non-supply of food grains or meals.
  - Establishing grievance redressal mechanisms at district and state levels.

Pulitzer Prize 2025

Why in News?

The **Pulitzer Prizes 2025**, honoring **outstanding contributions to journalism and the arts**, were announced by the Pulitzer Prize Board.

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Key Points

- **About Pulitzer Prize:**
  - The Pulitzer Prize is considered **America's most prestigious honor in the field of journalism.**
  - This award was **started in the year 1917**, which is **administered by Columbia University and the 'Pulitzer Prize Board'.**
    - The Pulitzer Prize Board is **composed of judges** appointed by Columbia University.
  - This award is **named in honor of renowned newspaper publisher Joseph Pulitzer**, who bequeathed **funds in his will to establish the School of Journalism** at Columbia University and to institute the Pulitzer Prize.
- **Reward:**
  - Each award winner carries a **certificate and prize money of USD 15,000** and the award winner in the **'Public Service Category'** receives a **gold medal.**
- **Pulitzer Prize 2025:**
  - The Pulitzer Prizes for the year 2025 were given in a **total of 23 categories,** including **15 categories of journalism** and **8 categories of books, drama, music etc.**
  - List of winners include:
    - **Fiction:** Percival Everett won the award for his novel **'James'** , which tells the story of 'Huckleberry Finn' from the point of view of a slave.
    - **Drama:** Branden Jacobs-Jenkins was honored for "Purpose," which delves into the inner complexities of a wealthy black family.
    - **Journalism:** The New York Times won four Pulitzers, The New Yorker three, and The Washington Post three for their swift reporting on the Trump assassination attempt.
    - **Public Service:** Kavita Suarna, Lizzie Presser, Cassandra Jaramillo and Stacy Kranitz (reporting on deaths of pregnant women due to obscure abortion law exceptions).
    - **Investigative Reporting:** Reuters Staff (Supply chain expose on fentanyl crisis).
    - **Explanation:** Azam Ahmed, Christina Goldbaum and Matthew Aikins (NYT).
    - **Local reporting:** Alissa Zhu, Nick Thiem and Jessica Gallagher (Baltimore fentanyl crisis).
    - **National Reporting:** Wall Street Journal Staff (reporting on Elon Musk).
    - **International reporting:** Declan Walsh and NYT staff (reporting on the Sudan conflict).
    - **Special Writing:** Mark Warren (Esquire).
    - **Commentary:** Mosab Abu Toha (The New Yorker).
    - **Review:** Alexandra Lang (Bloomberg CityLab).
    - **Editorial writing:** Raj Mankad, Sharon Steinman, Lisa Falkenberg and Leah Binkowitz (Houston Chronicle).
    - **Featured reporting and commentary:** Ann Telnes (Washington Post).
    - **Breaking News Photography:** Doug Mills (NYT).
    - **Exclusive photography:** Moises Saman (The New Yorker).
    - **Audio reporting:** The New Yorker Staff.

Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award

Why in News?

The **Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** honoured **Olympians Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty with the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award** for the year 2023.

Key Points

- **About Major Dhyanchand Khel Ratna Award:**
  - It is considered **India's highest sporting honour.**
  - It is given for the most outstanding performance by a sportsperson **in the field of sports during the last four years.**

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- In this, the winners are given a **medal, certificate and a prize money of Rs 25 lakh.**
- **The award was** instituted in the year **1991–92**; it was earlier called **the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award , which was renamed as Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award** in the year **2021.**
- This award is given by **the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India.**

Major Dhyan Chand

- Major Dhyan Chand was born on **29 August 1905 in Prayagraj.**
- He was a field hockey player who played international hockey **from the year 1926 to 1949.**
  - He was a **three-time Olympic gold medalist**, winning gold in the **1928, 1932, and 1936** Olympic editions.
- His exceptional skills in the game earned him the title of **'Hockey Wizard'**.
  - Dhyan Chand, along with his brother Roop Singh, contributed significantly to India's tally of 35 goals, leading to them being known as the **'Hockey Twins'.**
  - In **1934**, Dhyan Chand was honoured with the **captaincy of the Indian team.**
- Major Dhyan Chand retired from the Army as a Major in the year 1956 and was awarded the Padma Bhushan.
- National Sports Day is celebrated every year on **29 August on the birth anniversary of Major Dhyan Chand** to honour his contribution and promote sports culture.

Krishi Sakhi in UP

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh government** has decided to **train women** as **'Krishi Sakhi'** to promote **natural farming.**

Key Points

- **About Krishi Sakhi Scheme :**
  - This initiative formally **recognises the role of women in agriculture**, and is a strong step towards making them **economically and socially self-reliant.**
  - **Selection Process & Role:**
  - Those women will be selected as 'Krishi Sakhi' who will:
    - Be **a local resident.**
    - **Be associated with Self-Help Groups (SHGs)** or be **active in agricultural work.**
    - Have a minimum of **primary education (literacy is compulsory).**
  - **Their role includes:**
    - Raising **awareness among farmers** about natural farming benefits.
    - Receiving and sharing training on **organic inputs and seed treatment.**
    - Monitoring agricultural clusters and reporting farmer issues to **Krishi Vigyan Kendras.**
    - Promoting **collective farming** through women's groups.
  - **Training and Honorarium:**
    - These women will be given regular training by **Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) on topics like natural farming, organic product production, experimental methods, disease control.**
    - During the training they will be provided with **field demonstrations , visual aids**, and **toolkits.**
- **Two Bio-input Research Centres** will be established in each district.
  - 'Krishi Sakhis' will be paid **an honorarium of Rs 5,000 per month, which** will become **a source of fixed income** for rural women.
- Additionally, **performance-based incentives** may also be given in some areas.

Natural Farming

- Natural farming is a **chemical-free agricultural method** based on locally available resources.
- It promotes **traditional indigenous methods** that free producers from dependence on external inputs.
- The major focuses of natural farming are **on-farm biomass recycling with biomass mulching**, on-farm **use of indigenous cow dung and urine**, **pest management through diversity**, on-farm **vegetable mixing and exclusion of all synthetic chemical** inputs directly or indirectly.

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- Since no synthetic chemicals are used in natural farming, it is less hazardous to health.
- These foods have high nutritional content and provide better health benefits.
- Natural Farming aims to make farming viable and aspirational by reducing costs and risks, increasing the net income of farmers as a result of uniform yield and income from intercropping.

Autobiography Of Anandiben Patel

Why in News?

The autobiographical book **'Chunautiyaan Mujhe Pasand Hain' of Governor Anandiben Patel** was released by **the Vice President of India** at **Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University,** Lucknow.

Key Points

- **About the Book:**
  - This book depicts his struggles and achievements in **politics, administration and social life.**
  - The book mentions her journey from being a simple worker to becoming **the first woman Chief Minister of Gujarat** and then **Governor of Uttar Pradesh.**
  - It presents examples of **women's leadership, struggle and empowerment.**
- **Anandiben Patel:**
  - Anandiben Patel is currently **the Governor of Uttar Pradesh and** is known as an **influential woman leader** in Indian politics.
  - She was **born on 21 November 1941** in a Patidar family in Kharod village of Mehsana district of Gujarat.
  - She launched **the e-Zameen programme, which computerised land records** and digitised **farmers' thumb impressions and photographs.**

Governor

- **About:**
  - The Governor is the executive head of the state. **Traditionally,** he should not belong to the state where he is appointed, so that he can remain free from local politics.
    - Apart from this, while appointing a Governor, it **is necessary for the President to consult the Chief Minister regarding the affairs of the state so that** constitutional order is ensured in the state.
  - The Governor **is neither directly elected by the people** nor is he indirectly elected under the constitutional process like the President.
  - He is **appointed** by order of **the President under his seal.**
  - He **holds office at the pleasure of the President** and can be removed by the President at any time.
- **Terms of Governor's Office:**
  - The Raj Bhavan (official corporation) will be available to him without rent.
  - He shall be entitled to all emoluments **, privileges and allowances as may be determined by the Parliament.**
  - If the person is appointed as the Governor of two or more States, these emoluments and allowances will be provided jointly by the States as per **the norms set by the President.**
  - His financial achievements and allowances during his tenure **cannot be underestimated.**
- **Privilege:**
  - **Under Article 361, he** enjoys **personal immunity** from legal liability for his official acts.
  - During his term of office, he enjoys immunity from trial in **criminal proceedings (even if involving personal action).**
  - He cannot be arrested and put in jail.
    - However, civil legal proceedings can be initiated against them for personal activities after **giving two months' notice.**

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Night Landing Airstrip in UP

Why in News?

The 3.5 kilometre stretch of the Ganga Expressway in Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh will be the first expressway in the country where Indian Air Force **fighter planes** will be able **to land at night.**

Key Points

- **About Ganga Expressway :**
  - **Ganga Expressway** is **the second longest expressway** in the country after Mumbai-Nagpur Expressway.
  - It is an ambitious initiative with an estimated **length of 594 kilometres.**
  - Connecting the state from east to west, **this expressway** will pass through 518 villages in 12 districts, **significantly reducing the travel time between Meerut and Prayagraj.**
- **Strategic Approach:**
  - Uttar Pradesh now has three such expressways where **landing facility for fighter jets is available - Lucknow-Agra Expressway , Purvanchal Expressway** and **Ganga Expressway.**
  - This is the first time that state-of-the-art fighter aircraft like Rafale, Mirage **and Jaguar will land** at night on an **expressway** in India.
  - This airstrip **will serve as** an alternate runway for the Indian Air Force **in case of war or disaster.**

Rafale

- Rafale is a French **twin-engine and multirole fighter aircraft**, designed by Dassault **Aviation of France.**
- State-of-the-art technology has been used in this fighter plane and it is a **4.5 Generation fighter plane.**
- The Meteor Missile, **SCALP Cruise Missile and MICA Missile System** present in the Rafale fighter aircraft make it very important from the security point of view.
- Rafale can fly at a speed of 2,222.6 kilometres per hour and an altitude of 50,000 feet.
- This fighter aircraft is approximately 15.27 metres long and can carry 9,500 kilograms of bombs and ammunition at a time.

Jaguar

- The Jaguar is a **versatile aircraft used for ground attack, air defense, and reconnaissance missions.**
- It is a Fifth-generation (5G) fighter aircraft **capable of operating in heavily contested combat zones**, characterised by the **presence of the most advanced air and ground threats**, both current and anticipated.
- 5G fighter jets have **stealth capabilities** and can cruise at **supersonic speeds** without engaging afterburners.
- It **stands out from fourth-generation (4G)** peers due to its multi-spectral **low-observable design, self-protection, radar jamming capabilities, and integrated avionics.**
- The squadrons of MiG-21s, MiG-29s, **Jaguars, and** Mirage 2000s are scheduled to be phased out by the middle of the next decade.

Red Crowned Roofed Turtle

Why in News?

The Red Crowned Roofed Turtle has **returned to the** Ganga River after an absence of **three decades.**

- This success is a **historic biodiversity conservation achievement** under **the** Namami Gange Mission and **the** Turtle Survival Alliance India (TSAFI) **project.**

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Key Points

- **About the Red Crowned Roofed Turtle:**
  - **Scientific name:** Batagur kachuga.
  - **Common Names:** Bengal Roof Turtle, Red Crowned Roofed Turtle.
- **About:**
  - The Red Crown Roofed Turtle **is one of the 24 species endemic to India** , the males of which are characterized by bright colours like red, yellow, white and blue on the face and neck.
- **Distribution:**
  - **It is a freshwater turtle species found in deep-flowing rivers with nesting sites.**
  - Historically the species **was widespread in the Ganges River in both India and Bangladesh.** It is also found in the Brahmaputra basin.
  - Currently **the National Chambal River Gharial Sanctuary in India** is the only area **that has a significant population of the species,** but this protected area and habitat are also now under threat.
- **Threats:**
  - **Large coastal and riverine projects disrupt river flow** and increase water pollution.
  - Subpopulations suffer due to **entanglement in fishing nets and disturbances from human activity.**
  - **Pollution, irrigation-related water extraction, and unregulated dam flows** degrade natural habitats.
  - **Sand bar habitats** used for hunting are shrinking due to **increased mining** and seasonal agriculture along the Ganga River.
  - Overharvesting for **illegal consumption and international wildlife trade** poses a serious threat.
- **Protection Status:**
  - International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List **: Critically Endangered**
  - Wildlife Protection Act (WPA), 1972: **Schedule I**
  - CITES **: Appendix II**
- **Rehabilitation**
  - The turtles were released in **the Haiderpur wetland in Uttar Pradesh.** This area is located along the river Ganga and its ecosystem was considered **suitable for the rehabilitation of turtles.**
    - The turtles were divided into two groups – one was released in the upper part of the Ganga Barrage and the other in the lower part.
  - **Each turtle is fitted with a tracking device to monitor** their movements and adaptation to the environment.

Turtle Survival Alliance India (TSAFI)

- TSAFI represents the **Indian chapter of the global Turtle Survival Alliance**, which is committed to **protecting freshwater turtles and tortoises worldwide.**
- It works to s**afeguard turtles and tortoises** from major threats such as **habitat destruction**, i**llegal wildlife trade**, and the impacts of **climate change.**
- The organisation undertakes diverse initiatives, including:
  - Scientific research on turtle species and habitats
  - On-ground conservation projects
  - Public education and awareness campaigns
- TSAFI aims to ensure the **long-term survival of turtle species in India** by combining community involvement with scientific expertise.

National Chambal Sanctuary

- The **National Chambal Sanctuary,** located at the trijunction of **Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh.**
  - It is a fragile lotic ecosystem, which is a critically important breeding ground for **gharials - fish-eating crocodiles.**
- The sanctuary is protected under the **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972,** and is listed as an **'Important Bird and Biodiversity Area'.**
- The sanctuary is also a **proposed Ramsar site**, and over 320 species of resident and migratory birds inhabit the area.

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Namami Gange Programme

- Namami Gange Programme is an integrated conservation mission, approved by the **Central Government in June 2014** as a **'Flagship Programme'** to achieve the twin objectives of **effective abatement of pollution** and **conservation and rejuvenation of the National River Ganga.**
- It is being operated under the Ministry of Water Resources, Department of River Development and **Ganga Rejuvenation and Ministry of Jal Shakti.**
- In the second phase of Namami Gange Programme (2021-26), the states will focus on speedy completion of projects and preparation of credible **Detailed Project Reports (DPRs)** for projects in Ganga tributary towns.
- Attention is also being paid to the revival of **small rivers and wetlands.**

Sacred Buddha Relics Of Sarnath

Why in News?

Sacred Buddha relics from Sarnath in Uttar Pradesh will be displayed during **the United Nations Day of Vesak (UNDV) celebrations** in **Vietnam** in **May 2025.**

Key Points

- **About Buddha Relics:**
  - These relics are enshrined in **the Moolgandha Kuti Viharaya Monastery located in Sarnath, Uttar Pradesh.** It is run by **the Mahabodhi Society, which** was founded by **Anagarika Dharmapala.**
  - The remains were excavated by **H. Longhurst** at **Nagarjunakonda (Andhra Pradesh)** during **1927–1931.**
  - These relics were handed over to the Mahabodhi Society on 27 December 1932 by **Rai Bahadur Dayaram Sahni** on behalf of **the Viceroy of India.**
  - The event is being organised in collaboration with **the Ministry of Culture, Government of India** and **the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC).**
- **United Nations Day of Vesak (UNDV):**
  - **Vesak Day** is the holiest day in Buddhism, celebrated to commemorate **the birth, enlightenment** and **Mahaparinirvana of Lord Buddha.**
  - **The United Nations General Assembly** passed a resolution on **December 15, 1999** recognizing it as **an international day.**
  - The first official event was held in **2000 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York.**
  - The theme of UN Vesak Day 2025 is **"Buddhist Approach to Unity and Inclusion for Human Dignity: Buddhist Insights for World Peace and Sustainable Development".**

International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)

- It is the **largest religious Buddhist organization.**
- The aim of the association is to **build the role of Buddhism on the global stage**, to help preserve Buddhism's heritage, share knowledge and promote its values, and to represent Buddhism through meaningful participation in global dialogue.
- In **November 2011 the 'Global Buddhist Congregation' (GBC) was hosted in New Delhi,** where the attendees unanimously adopted a resolution to form an international umbrella body—the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC).
- Headquarters: Delhi (India).

Green Municipal Bonds

Why in News?

Ghaziabad Municipal Corporation in Uttar Pradesh has become the first in India to issue a **certified Green Municipal Bond** under the **Swachh Bharat Mission–Urban** to promote sustainable water management.

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Key Points

- **About Green Bond:**
  - Green bonds are debt instruments used to raise funds for **green projects , particularly in areas such as renewable energy,** clean transportation, **sustainable water management** , etc.
    - A bond, which is a fixed income instrument, represents a loan made by an investor to a borrower (usually a corporate or governmental).
    - Traditional bonds (other than green bonds) pay a fixed interest rate (coupon) to investors.
  - Green bonds enhance the reputation of the issuer, as it helps demonstrate their commitment to **sustainable development.**
- **Ghaziabad's Success:**
  - Ghaziabad raised Rs 150 crore via India's first Green Municipal Bond.
  - The funds built a modern **tertiary sewage treatment plant (TSTP).**
  - The project runs on a **PPP-HAM model** with 40% civic investment.
  - The bond's success boosted investor trust in urban local bodies.
  - Ghaziabad won the **2024–25 Best Municipal Treated Water Award.**

Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban

- **Introduction:**
  - **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban (SBM-U)** was launched on **2 October 2014 by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** as a national campaign to promote cleanliness, hygiene and proper waste management in urban areas.
  - Its objective is to **make the cities and towns across India clean** and **free from open defecation.**
- **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 1.0:**
  - The first phase of SBM-U focused on achieving the goal of making urban India open defecation free by providing **access to toilets and promoting behavior change.**
  - SBM-U 1.0 was successful in achieving its target and 100% of urban India was declared ODF.
- **Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0 (2021-2026):**
  - SBM-U 2.0, announced in the Budget for 2021-22, is a continuation of the first phase of the same scheme.
  - Its **second phase** aims to move towards the **goals of ODF as well as ODF+ and ODF++** and focuses on **making urban India garbage-free.**
  - It emphasizes on promoting sustainable sanitation practices, waste management and a circular economy.

Uttar Pradesh Leather and Footwear Policy-2025

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh government** is set to approve the **Leather and Footwear Policy-2025.**

Key Points

- **About the Policy:**
  - **Objective:**
    - To increase **production capacity.**
    - Encouraging **exports and enhancing global brand presence.**
    - To make the state **economically strong** by increasing revenue. To realize the vision of making Uttar Pradesh an "**enterprise state".**
  - **Strategic Initiatives:**
    - **Kanpur** will be given **a central role** in this regional development strategy.
    - This will boost regional development in cities like **Agra**, **Kanpur**, **Unnao** , **Lucknow** and **Bareilly.**
  - **Promotion of private industrial parks:**
    - Incentives such as **capital subsidy** and **100%stamp duty exemption** to private investors.

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- It is mandatory to develop all parks within **5 years.**
- At least **25%of the land** must be reserved for green and open areas.
- Each entity (plant, cluster or park) will have to make a minimum investment of **Rs 150-200 crore.**
- One unit is likely to generate **1,000 to 3,000 employment opportunities.**

- **Current Scenario:**
  - Uttar Pradesh has **a 46%share** in the total leather exported from India.
  - **Agra** is considered the **footwear capital** and **Kanpur, the global hub for safety footwear and leather goods.**
- **Importance:**
  - This policy will help Uttar Pradesh to emerge as an **industrial hub in line with the "Make in India" and "Local to Global"** initiatives.

Make in India

- **Introduction:**
  - **Launched in 2014**, Make in India aims to transform the country into a leading global manufacturing and investment destination.
  - This campaign was launched to facilitate investments, promote innovation and skill development, protect intellectual property and build best-in-class manufacturing infrastructure.
- **Goal:**
  - To increase the growth rate of the manufacturing sector to **12-14% per annum.**
  - To create **100 million additional manufacturing jobs by 2022 (revised date 2025).**
  - To increase the contribution of the manufacturing sector to **GDP to 25% by the year 2025.**

Encroachment Along Indo-Nepal Border

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh government** launched a campaign against **illegal encroachment** in the districts along **the India-Nepal border** between 25-27 April 2025.

Key Points

- **About the Campaign:**
  - Its objective is to **remove illegal constructions and strengthen the security system** in the India-Nepal border area.
  - Under this **illegal structures located within a radius of 0 to 15 kilometres** from the border were **identified and removed.**
  - The government took action against unrecognized **madrasas, mosques, and other religious structures.**
  - The campaign was actively conducted in the districts of **Lakhimpur Kheri, Shravasti, Siddharthnagar, Maharajganj, Bahraich, Balrampur and Pilibhit** bordering Nepal.

Eco-tourism in UP

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh government** has decided to develop **dams** and **reservoirs as tourist destinations** to promote **eco-tourism in the state.**

Key Points

- **About the Initiative:**
  - Under this initiative, infrastructure will be constructed on **seven major dams and lakes in Chitrakoot, Mahoba, Sonbhadra, Hamirpur, Jhansi, Siddharthnagar** and **Banda** districts.
  - **The cooperation of the Irrigation and Water Resources Department** has been ensured to promote **water and adventure sports activities** at these places.

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- **The reservoirs and dams selected include:**
  - **Gunta Dam** (Chitrakoot)
  - **Arjun Dam** (Mahoba)
  - **Dhandhraul Dam** (Sonbhadra)
  - **Maudaha Dam** (Hamirpur)
  - **Garhmau Lake** (Jhansi)
  - **Majhauli Sagar** (Siddharthanagar)
  - **Nawab Tank** (Banda)
- The government aims to enhance the natural beauty of these reservoirs through modern tourist facilities like **resorts**, **boating**, **water sports**, **trekking** and **camping.**
- This scheme will strengthen employment generation and **economic development at the local level.**
- **The Irrigation and Water Resources Department** will provide technical assistance and necessary permissions for these projects, and will also ensure compliance with **the safety standards of the dams** and maintaining **the structure.**
- Special attention will also be given to **environmental and safety standards** during **water sports activities.**

Eco Tourism

- **Introduction:**
  - Eco tourism is a form of **tourism that focuses on environmentally friendly , sustainable and natural areas.**
  - In this, natural areas such as **national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, rainforests** etc. are visited in such a way that there is no harm to the biodiversity and culture there.
- **Objective:**
  - It aims to support **conservation efforts, provide economic benefits to local communities,** and create awareness among visitors about nature.
- **Types:**
  - **Wildlife tourism:** Observing animals in national parks and sanctuaries.
  - **Forest tourism:** exploring rainforests and deciduous forests.
  - **Marine tourism:** Observation of marine life.
  - **Cultural tourism:** getting to know the customs of indigenous communities.
  - **Adventure tourism:** Environmentally sustainable activities like trekking, mountaineering etc.
- **Global Perspective of Ecotourism:**
  - The **United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)** has recognized ecotourism as a means of sustainable development.

Kanha Gaushala

Why in News?

A two megawatt solar power plant will be installed at **the Kanha Gaushala** of the Agra Municipal Corporation, making it the first such Gaushala in the state that will produce and use **renewable energy on a large scale.**

Key Points

- **About Kanha Gaushala:**
  - This project is being implemented under **the Municipal Bond Scheme,** by the Municipal Corporation keeping in mind the goal of a **green future** by the year **2025.**
    - This will not only fulfill the energy needs of the cowshed from a clean source but will also strengthen environmental protection.
  - The cowshed already has **100 solar street lights** installed, which are an example of **clean energy.**
  - **Cow dung** is being used to make cow dung cakes in the Gaushala, which are **being** used as an alternative to wood in **religious rituals** and **funerals.**
  - This prevent **deforestation** and **protect the environment.**
- **Location:**
  - The goshala is located on a land where the soil **is barren** and groundwater is **saline**. Despite this, a dense forest has been developed here

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in an area of 5000 square meters by **Miyawaki technique** , **which** promotes **biodiversity and** acts as a natural **oxygen zone.**

- This cowshed has now become a leading model of **energy**, **greenery** and **innovation.**

Municipal Bonds

- **Debt instruments** issued by **Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)** to fund **infrastructure and development projects.**
- **Advantages: Reduce reliance on government funds**, enhance **financial autonomy**, attract **private investment,** and enable **long-term urban financing.**
- **Challenges: Low issuance** due to **heavy dependence on state grants (38% of revenue in FY 24).** Only a few cities like **Pune, Ahmedabad, Surat, Hyderabad, and Lucknow** have issued bonds.
- **Spending Pattern (FY18-FY25): Most funds raised** by municipalities **through bonds** were allocated **to urban water supply and sewerage**, followed by renewable energy and river development.

Miyawaki Plantation Method

- The pioneer of the Miyawaki method is **Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki.** With this method, forests can be converted into **dense forests in a very short time.**
- This methodology was **developed in the 1970s** with the basic aim of creating dense green cover within a small piece of land.
- In this process the trees grow on their own and within three years they grow to their full height.
- The plants used in the Miyawaki method are mostly self-sufficient and do not require regular maintenance such as fertilizing and watering.

BBAU Gets Patent Bioplastic

Why in News?

A scientist from **Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar University (BBAU), Lucknow** has been granted **a patent by the Government of India** for the technology of making **bio-plastic.**

Key Points

- This technology uses **cow dung and a special type of bacteria to** produce **biodegradable plastic.**
- **Bottles**, **polybags** and **other useful items** can be made from this bio-plastic.
- This plastic is based on **polyhydroxy butyrate (PHB), a naturally degradable** bio-plastic.
- Earlier, PHB was produced mainly from biomass such as **sugarcane, maize, wheat, rice and banana peels, but its commercial use** was limited due to **high cost and expensive raw materials.**
- But BBAU scientists have developed a **modified cow-dung-based medium, which reduces the cost of PHB production by 200 times.**
- Traditional plastic takes **thousands of years** to decompose, whereas the bio-plastic developed by BBAU scientists decomposes **in just 40-50 years and** does not cause **any harm to the environment.**
- **In the backdrop of global warming and impact** of plastic pollution **on biodiversity**, this research paves a new path towards **environmental protection.**

Bio-Plastic

- Bio-plastics are derived from **renewable organic sources** such as **sugarcane, corn**, etc, while traditional plastics are made from **petroleum**. They are not always biodegradable or compostable.
- Bio-plastics are produced by extracting sugar from plants such as corn and sugar cane and converting it into **polylactic acid (PLA)**. Alternatively, they can be made from **polyhydroxyalkanoates (PHA)** from microorganisms that are then polymerised into bio-plastics.
- The production of bio-plastics absorbs **carbon dioxide (CO2)** and contributes to a neutral or potentially negative carbon balance, helping to reduce the **carbon footprint** compared to fossil-based plastics.
- Unlike conventional plastics, bio-plastics do not contain harmful chemicals like phthalates, which are considered hazardous to human health.
- Bio-plastics are as strong and durable as traditional plastics, making them ideal for use in a variety of applications such as **food packaging, agriculture and medical supplies.**

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Chief Minister's Mass Marriage Scheme

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has made changes in **the Chief Minister Mass Marriage Scheme** to provide relief to **poor and needy families** who are **unable to bear the expenses of the marriage** of their daughters.

Key Points

- **About the Scheme:**
  - Under **the Chief Minister Mass Marriage Scheme, now assistance of Rs 1 lakh** will be given which will be distributed in three parts:
    - **Rs 75,000** will be transferred directly to **the girl's bank account.**
    - Rs **10,000** will be given for **clothes, gifts and essential items.**
    - Rs **15,000** will be given to spend on **organizing the wedding.**
  - In order to promote **religious harmony** and **social respect,** the State Government has been running **the Chief Minister Mass Marriage Scheme** since **October 2017.**
  - Under the scheme, marriage ceremonies are conducted according to the customs and traditions of **different religions and communities.**
    - It also aims to eliminate **unnecessary display and wastage** in marriage functions.
  - This scheme is for **the poor, Scheduled Caste (SC), Scheduled Tribe (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC)** and **minority communities.**
    - **Arrangements for marriage of widows, abandoned and divorced** women have also been made under this scheme.
  - There is a provision for registration at the level of **municipal bodies** and **Panchayati Raj institutions.**
  - Registration of **minimum 10 couples is necessary** for organizing mass marriage.
- **Eligibility:**
  - The age of the girl should **be 18 years** and the age of the boy should be **21 years or more.**
  - Both the bride and groom should be **permanent residents of Uttar Pradesh.**
  - **The annual income** of the family should be within the limit set by the government.

IIT BHU Tops At Forensic Hackathon 2025

Why in News?

The research team from the **School of Biochemical Engineering, Indian Institute of Technology (BHU), Varanasi** has won **top honours** at **the Forensic Hackathon 2025.**

- This hackathon was part of **the All India Forensic Science Summit** organised by **the National Forensic Sciences University (NFSU).**

Key Points

- **About the Award:**
  - The award was presented by **the Union Home Minister at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi.**
  - The team was awarded **a cash prize of Rs 2 lakh** and a **memento** for their **innovative research.**
- **Developed Technology:**
  - The team has developed **a glycan-based forensic technique that** allows **accurate age estimation** based on **biological fluids, i.e., it can be used to estimate the exact age of a person even without DNA.**
    - This technology combines **glycomic profiling** with machine **learning algorithms to** estimate both **chronological age** and **biological age.**
  - Currently practiced **DNA-based forensic analyses** , which incorporate **epigenetic markers** , have **biological variability** and **technical limitations.**
    - **DNA methylation-based models** often require **ancient and good-quality DNA,** which may be unavailable in forensic cases.

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- **Importance:**
  - This innovation can make **profiling of suspects based on samples collected from crime scenes** more accurate, especially when DNA matches are not available.
  - This technology could be useful in **identifying missing persons**, **identifying unidentified victims in mass disasters** , and verifying **claims of being a juvenile or misrepresenting age.**
  - Biological age provides important evidence about a person's **health**, **immune status** and **stress, which** can help in **reconstructing a crime.**

Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA)

- Deoxyribonucleic acid (DNA) is an **organic molecule with a complex molecular structure.**
- The strands of a DNA molecule are made up of a **long chain of monomer nucleotides**. It is arranged in a **double helix structure.**
- **James Watson and Francis Crick discovered that DNA** is a double-helix polymer in the year 1953.
- This is necessary for the transfer of genetic characteristics of organisms from one generation to another.
- Most of the DNA is found in the nucleus of the cell, so it is called central DNA.

Sports Mahakumbh in Lucknow

Why in News?

From 19 to 22 April 2025, Sansad Khel Maha Kumbh was organized at **KD Singh Babu Stadium** in **Lucknow** Uttar Pradesh.

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Key Points

- **About Khel Maha Kumbh :**
  - The event aimed to promote sportsmanship, a healthy lifestyle, and indigenous sports among youth, in line with the **Khelo India campaign**.
  - In this sports Mahakumbh, modern sports like **athletics**, **volleyball**, **kabaddi**, **basketball**, **football**, **hockey**, **boxing and taekwondo** along with traditional and indigenous sports like **Kalaripayattu, Yogasana** and **Mallakhamb** were also showcased.
  - The competition was held in two categories:
    - **Junior Category:** Students from class **9 to 12.**
    - **Senior Category: Degree college and university** students.
  - **Participants:**
    - A total of **2,500 players** were selected out of **10,000 players.**
    - The selection process was done through competitions held **at the district level in eight zones.**
    - The winners were given a cash prize of Rs 8 lakh.

Resham Sakhi Scheme

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh government** launched **the Resham Sakhi Yojana** with the aim of **economically empowering** rural women.

Key Points

- **About the Scheme:**
  - Under this scheme, women will be able **to earn income** from **sericulture** **at home.**
  - This scheme is being implemented with the joint efforts of **State Rural Livelihood Mission** and **Silk Department.**
  - Under **this scheme** , women of rural areas will be given training in **silkworm rearing** so that they can produce **mulberry silk** and **tussar silk** **at their homes.**
    - Training **on mulberry silk rearing will be given in Mysore, Karnataka** and **tassar silk rearing** in **Ranchi, Jharkhand.**
  - The scheme aims to connect **50,000 women in the next 5 years. In the first phase, 7500 women from 15 districts** will be connected by the year 2025-26.
- **Importance**:
  - **The rural economy** will improve as women will be able to earn income from local resources.
  - **Women empowerment** will be promoted, which will help in reducing social inequalities.
  - The silk **industry will expand and diversify**, which will give a new dimension to the economic growth of the state.
  - **Urban migration** will decrease as women will be able to get employment in their own villages.

Silk Production

- This is an **agriculture based industry**. In this industry, **silkworms are reared for the production of raw silk.**
- The main activities of silk production include **cultivation of food plants for the diet of silkworms** and **extraction of silk fibres** from the cocoons woven by the insects, its processing and weaving etc.
  - The rearing of silkworms to produce raw silk is called sericulture or silkworm rearing.
  - **Domesticated silkworms (Bombyx mori)** are raised for the purpose of sericulture.
- **Silk Production in India:**
  - There are five major types of silk of commercial importance obtained from different species of silkworms.
  - These are - **Mulberry, Oak Tasar, Tropical Tasar, Muga and Eri.**
  - Apart from mulberry, other varieties of silk are wild types, commonly called 'Vanya'.
  - All these commercial varieties of silk are produced in India.
  - South India is the major silk producing region of the country and this region is also quite famous for weaving Kanchipuram, Dharmavaram, Aarni etc.

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Criminalization Of Civil Disputes

Why in News?

Recently, Chief Justice of India **Sanjiv Khanna** criticized the Uttar Pradesh government for the **increasing tendency of converting ordinary civil matters into criminal cases.**

Key Points

- **Reasons for Criminalization of Civil disputes:**
  - **Desire for speedy justice:** Frustrated by delays in the civil justice process, litigants resort to criminal litigation in order to exert pressure on the other party and obtain a quick resolution.
  - **Strategic use of criminal sections:** There is a growing tendency to criminalise civil cases by using criminal sections such as **Section 420 (cheating), 406 (criminal breach of trust). The aim is often to gain personal or political advantage.**
  - **Lack of legal understanding:** Many times the police and investigating agencies are not clear about the difference between civil and criminal cases. As a result, even normal contractual or business disputes are registered as criminal complaints.
  - **Delay in judicial process:** It can take years for decisions to be made in civil courts, which discourages litigants. In such a situation, they file a criminal case in the hope of getting quick relief and put pressure on the opposing party so that the dispute can be resolved quickly.

Difference between civil dispute and criminal dispute:

Points of Difference	Civil Dispute	Criminal Dispute
Nature of the dispute	Disputes usually involve private parties or organizations seeking to resolve disagreements over legal rights or obligations. For example, contract disputes, personal injury claims, family law matters (divorce, child custody) and property disputes.	These include violations of laws that are considered crimes against the state or society. Crimes are prosecuted by government authorities and aim to punish the offender for his wrongdoing. For example, theft, assault, murder and drug offences.
commencement of proceedings	Usually initiated by private individuals or entities (plaintiffs) who file a suit against another party (defendant) seeking damages, injunctions, or other remedies.	Initiated by the government, represented by a prosecutor, who files charges against a person or entity accused of committing a crime.
burden of proof	The burden is usually on the plaintiff, who must establish his or her case by a preponderance of the evidence. This means that they must show that it is more likely than not that the defendant is liable.	This burden is on the prosecution and it must be proved beyond reasonable doubt. This is a more demanding standard designed to protect the rights of the accused.

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Purpose of the proceedings	To provide remedies to the injured party or parties. Remedies may include monetary compensation (damages), specific performance, or injunction.	To punish the criminals for violating the laws and to deter others from committing similar crimes. Rehabilitation and security of society are also important goals.

PM Surya Ghar Yojana

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government **will double the installation rate of solar rooftop plants** under the Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Yojana.

Key Points

- **Current Status:**
  - Over **one lakh plants have already been installed across the state**, with an installation rate of approximately 11,000 per month and 500 per day.
- **Target of the Government:**
  - The government **aims to install 2.65 lakh plants in 2025-26**, raising the monthly installation rate to 22,000.
    - The overall target is to install 8 lakh solar rooftop plants **by March 2027**.
  - **To expedite the process**, over 2,500 vendors have been empaneled, and approximately 1,800 vendors have been trained.
- **Multi-Level Planning:**
  - The target has been divided at **the district, discom, municipal corporation** and **municipality level.**
  - The scheme has been linked to **the Chief Minister's dashboard,enabling real-time monitoring** and tracking of its progress.
  - Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Development Agency (UPNEDA) is committed to **ensuring that the scheme reaches every household.**
  - Vendors are being enlisted by reaching out to the applicants.
    - Additionally, **their economic capacity is being strengthened through loans and credit guarantee schemes** provided by banks.
- **Training & Support:**
  - The training work is being done in **a phased manner** with the cooperation of the **National Institute of Entrepreneurship and Small Business**, **Ministry of Skill Development**, **Government of India** and **UPNEDA.**

PM Surya Ghar- Muft Bijli Yojana

- **About:**
  - This scheme was launched by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy in **February 2024**.
  - This is a **central scheme to promote the adoption of** solar rooftop systems by providing adequate financial subsidy and ensuring ease of installation.
  - It **aims to provide free electric power to one crore households in India** who wish to install power units with rooftop solar panels.
    - The households will be able to get **300 units of electricity free every month**.
- **Implementing Agencies:** The scheme will be implemented **at two levels:**
  - **National Level:** Managed by National Programme Implementation Agency (NPIA).
  - **State Level:** Managed by State Implementation Agencies (SIAs), which are the distribution utilities (DISCOMs) or electricity/energy departments of the respective states or UTs.
- **Subsidy Structure:** The scheme provides subsidies to reduce the cost of solar rooftop system installation. The subsidy is **limited to a maximum capacity of 3 kW.**
  - **60% subsidy** for solar systems up to 2 kW capacity.
  - **40% subsidy** for solar systems between 2kW to 3kW capacity.

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MoU Signed Between NSE and UP Government

Why in News?

Recently, an **important** Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed between **the Uttar Pradesh Government** and **the** National Stock Exchange (NSE).

Key Points

- **About the MoU:**
  - Its **objective is to facilitate capital-raising opportunities** for the state's 96 lakh Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).
    - These MSMEs **can now raise funds by launching** Initial Public Offerings (IPOs) through the NSE Emerge platform.
  - NSE Emerge is a **dedicated platform designed to connect MSMEs with the capital market**, offering opportunities for public funding, increased brand visibility, and access to a broader investor base.
    - Under the agreement, **NSE** will assist the Uttar Pradesh Government in organizing **seminars, road shows, workshops, knowledge sessions and MSME camps** to enhance IPO awareness among MSMEs.
  - Through this initiative, **MSME units will** get access to public capital as well as the confidence of investors.
  - As of April, 2025, **612 companies** have been listed on the NSE Emerge platform, raising capital of **more than Rs 17, 003 crore and their total market capitalization** is Rs 1, 76, 565 crore.
- **Significance:**
  - This initiative will boost **industrial investment,** employment generation **and innovation in Uttar Pradesh.**
  - MSME will be **helped to compete at national and global level**.
    - As part of the MSME Policy 2022, **financial assistance of up to Rs 5 lakh is being offered** to support MSMEs in getting listed on the stock exchange.

National Stock Exchange (NSE)

- National Stock Exchange of India Limited (NSE) is **India's largest financial marketplace**.
- The National Stock Exchange, **incorporated in 1992**, has evolved into a sophisticated, electronic marketplace, **ranking fourth in the world by equity trading volume (as of 2021)**.
- It was the **first exchange in India to provide modern, fully automated electronic trading**.
  - NSE is the **largest private wide-area network in India**.
- Nifty 50 **is the flagship index** of the NSE.
  - The index **tracks the behaviour of a portfolio of blue chip companies,** the largest and most liquid Indian securities.

Fighter Aircraft Rafale and Mirage

Why in News

French aircraft manufacturer Dassault Aviation will carry out repair and maintenance and overhaul (MRO) of the Indian Air Force 's Rafale and Mirage-2000 fighter aircraft at the Noida airport complex. The company will also set up a Centre of Excellence and a university for this.

Key Points

- **About:**
  - **1365 hectares of land** has been acquired for the MRO facility , which is located near **Noida International Airport.**
  - **Aeronautical and Avionics courses** at **high school, polytechnic and graduation levels** will be started at **the Centre of Excellence** established by Dassault.
  - It aims to reduce foreign dependency by enhancing MRO capacity in India, promote self-reliance in the defence sector and enhance investment and employment opportunities in

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the state by attracting FDI (Foreign Direct Investment).

- The company will also get **a subsidy of ₹12 crore** under **the FDI policy.**
- **The MRO industry** in India was worth **$1.7 billion** in 2021 , and is projected to reach **$7 billion by 2030.**
- India has **713 aircraft** , which can increase to **1522 by 2031. The Indian Air Force has 36 Rafale** and **50 Mirage-2000** aircraft.
- India will no longer be dependent on countries like **America, China and Singapore for the maintenance** of **state-of-the-art aircraft like Rafale and Mirage.**

Importance:

- **The maintenance cost** and **time** of the Indian Air Force will be reduced.
- India's **strategic autonomy** and **defence preparedness** will be strengthened.
- **Local employment** , **technical education** and **industrial development** will be promoted.
- India's **MRO industry** can become globally competitive.
- **Uttar Pradesh** will get a **new identity** in the aviation sector.

About Rafale

- Rafale is a French twin-engine and multirole fighter aircraft, designed by Dassault Aviation of France.
- State-of-the-art technology has been used in this fighter plane and it is a 4.5 Generation fighter plane.
- The Meteor Missile, SCALP Cruise Missile and **MICA Missile System** present in the Rafale fighter aircraft make it very important from the security point of view.
- Rafale can fly at a speed of 2,222.6 kilometres per hour and an altitude of 50,000 feet.
- This fighter aircraft is approximately 15.27 metres long and can carry 9,500 kilograms of bombs and ammunition at a time.

15th Hockey Senior Men National Championship 2025

Why in News?

Punjab won **the 15th Hockey India Senior Men's National Championship, 2025 by defeating Madhya Pradesh. Uttar Pradesh defeated Manipur to finish third.**

Key Points

About the Championship:

- This championship was organised from 4 to **15 April** at **the Major Dhyan Chand Hockey Stadium** in **Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh.**
- According to Hockey India, the tournament followed the same **division-based format as the Senior Women's National Championship.**
- A total of 30 teams participated in the competition and were divided into three divisions – **Division A, Division B and Division C.**

Major Dhyan Chand

- Major Dhyan Chand He was a field hockey player who played international hockey **from the year 1926 to 1949.**
- He was **a three-time Olympic gold medalist** , winning gold in **the 1928, 1932, and 1936 Olympic editions.**
- His exceptional skills in the game earned him the title of **'Hockey Wizard'.**
- Dhyan Chand, along with and his brother Roop Singh, contributed significantly to India's tally of 35 goals, leading to them being are known as **the 'Hockey Twins'.**
- **In the year 1934,** Dhyan Chand was honoured **with the captaincy of the Indian team.**
- Major Dhyan Chand retired from the Army as a Major in the year 1956 and was awarded **the Padma Bhushan.**

National Sports Day is celebrated every year on **29 August on the birth anniversary of Major Dhyan Chand to** honour his contribution and promote **sports culture.**

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Kailash Mansarovar Yatra

Why in News?

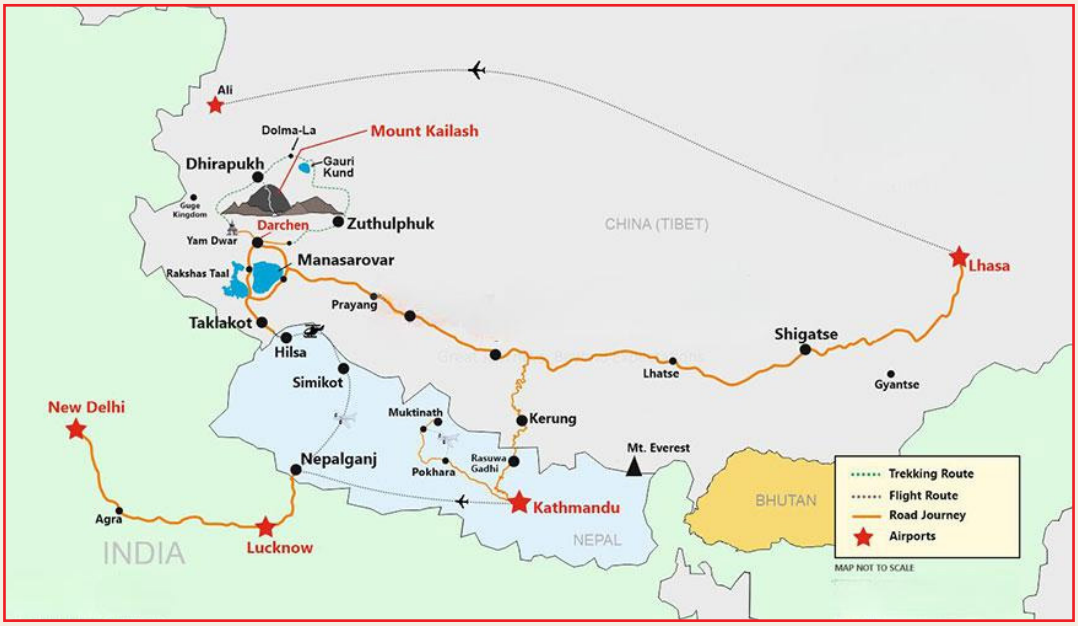
Indian and Chinese officials are stepping up efforts to finalise an agreement to resume the Kailash Mansarovar annual pilgrimage, which has been suspended since 2019.

Key Points

- **About the Developments:**
  - The pilgrimage, **suspended since 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic** and border tensions, is set to recommence.
  - Both **nations have agreed in principle to resume direct air services,** aiming to facilitate travel for pilgrims and strengthen people-to-people connections.
  - Discussions are underway to resume the **exchange of hydrological data and cooperation on trans-border rivers**, enhancing mutual trust and collaboration.
  - The year **2025 marks the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between India and China**, providing an opportune moment to rebuild ties through initiatives like the Yatra.

Mount Kailash

- It is a **diamond-shaped** peak made of **black rock, located in Tibet.**
- India organizes the annually between **June and September** through the **Lipulekh Pass (since 1981) in Uttarakhand** and the **Nathu La Pass (since 2015) in Sikkim.**
- **Mount Kailash** stands at **6,638 meters** and is considered a sacred peak by Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and **Bons** (indigenous religion of Tibet).
  - For **Tibetans Buddhists**, Kailash is the cosmic axis, or **Mount Meru**, connecting **heaven and earth.**
  - In **Hinduism**, it is the **abode of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati.**
  - In Jainism, Kailash is **Ashtapada**, where **Rishabhanatha** attained enlightenment.
- Mount Kailash is considered the **spiritual center of the Earth**, with the **Sutlej, Brahmaputra, Kamali, and Indus** rivers originating from it.
- **Lake Mansarovar** is located at the **base of the mountain.**
- Mount Kailash, though **lower in height than Mount Everest (8,849 meters)**, remains **unclimbed** as its **ascent is prohibited** due to its **sacred significance.**



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'One KGBV, One Game' Scheme

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has launched the **'One KGBV, One Sport' scheme** to enhance the sporting talent of girls studying in **Kasturba Gandhi Residential Girls Schools (KGBVs).**

Key Points

- **About the Scheme:**
  - This scheme is an effort to give special training to girls in the field of sports as well as encourage them towards physical, mental and social development.
  - The aim of the government is to enable **girls from backward and underprivileged communities** to specialise in sports and prepare them to compete at the national level.
  - **Two KGBV schools** from each of the 73 districts (except Kanpur Dehat, which has only one) will be included in the pilot project.
  - **Sports selection process** : A sports committee will be formed in every school, which will select the sport based on the interest and resources of the students.
  - **Training** : With the help of sports experts, **special sports training** will be given to the girl students. Along with this, health check-up, nutrition and health awareness programmes will also be organised.
  - **Social and departmental support** : Former national and international level players will be invited to motivate the students and awards will also be given to the girls who perform exceptionally well.
  - **Sports Associations and Corporate Support** : Support would be sought from state and national level sports associations as well as corporate groups to provide necessary sports equipment and other facilities.

Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV) Scheme

- The KGBV scheme was **launched by the Government of India in August 2004**. The scheme aims to provide quality education through residential schools at the upper primary level to girls belonging to **Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC) and minority communities** in remote and educationally backward areas.
  - The KGBV scheme is implemented in **educationally backward blocks (EBB)** where the rural female literacy rate is lower than the national average and the gender literacy gap is higher than the national average.
  - Out of the total seats under the scheme, **75% of the seats** are reserved for girls from **SC, ST, OBC and minority communities** while the remaining **25% seats are** given to girls living **below the poverty line (BPL).**
- Under the scheme, girls in the age group of 10 to 18 years , especially those who are from disadvantaged backgrounds or reside in areas with low female literacy , are eligible for enrolment.
  - Additionally, girls who have not completed primary education , or are living in difficult circumstances , may also be granted exceptional enrolment.
- The scope of the KGBV scheme is limited to areas where –
  - There is concentration of tribal, SC, OBC and minority population ,
  - low female literacy rate or a high number of girls out of school ,
  - There may be small and scattered settlements which may not be suitable for schools.
- At present, under the KGBV Scheme, at least one school is established in each EBB, providing education with residential facilities to girls from class VI to XII.

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McGregor Memorial Medal

Why in News?

On 16 April 2025, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) **General Anil Chauhan** awarded **the McGregor Memorial Medal** for **the year 2023 and 2024** to five military personnel.

Key Points

- **About the Winners:**
  - They has been given this honour for their **outstanding contribution in military reconnaissance, exploration and adventure activities.**
    - The awardees for the year 2023 included **Wing Commander D. Panda of the Air Force** and **Electrical Artificer (Radio) Rahul Kumar Pandey of the Navy.**
    - For the year 2024, **Chief Electrical Aircraft Artificer (Radio) of the Navy, Ram Ratan Jat** and **Sergeant Jhumar Ram Poonia of the Air Force** were awarded the medal.
  - **Apart from this, Colonel Ranveer Singh Jamwal,** Director of **National Mountaineering and Adventure Sports Institute in Arunachal Pradesh** was also honored.
- **McGregor Memorial Medal**
  - The MacGregor Memorial Medal is awarded in memory of **Major General Sir Charles Metcalfe MacGregor, the founder of the United Service Institution of India (USI).**
    - This award was **established on July 3, 1888.**
  - **The main objective of this award was to honour reconnaissance and exploratory journeys** undertaken by the armed forces, but **in the year 1986 the scope of the award was extended** to include **military operations and adventure activities as well.**
  - The award is now open to all serving and retired ranks of **the Indian Armed Forces , Territorial Army, Reserve Forces, National Rifles and Assam Rifles.**
  - **A total of 127 MacGregor Medals** have been awarded so far, of which 103 medals date **back to before independence.**

Chief of Defence Staff (CDS)

- The CDS serves as the **permanent chairman of the 'Chiefs of Staff Committee'** which will also have the three service chiefs as members.
  - Its main function is to **promote greater operational synergy among the tri-services of the Indian Army** and to **minimise inter-service conflicts.**
- He also heads the newly created **Department of Military Affairs (DMA)** in the Ministry of Defence.
  - He will function as the **principal military adviser to the Defence Minister** on matters relating to the three services, but the three service chiefs will continue to advise the Defence Minister on matters relating to their respective services.
  - As head of the DMA, the CDS is empowered to prioritise inter-service procurement decisions as the permanent chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee.
- CDS has also been given the authority to give instructions to the three chiefs.
  - However, he does not have the authority to command any army.
- The CDS is the first among equals and has the rank of Secretary within the DoD (Department of Defence) and his powers will be limited to the revenue budget only.
- He also plays an advisory role in the **Nuclear Command Authority (NCA).**

Uttar Pradesh First in GI Tagging

Why in News?

The Prime Minister presented Geographical Indicator (GI) tag certificates **to 21 traditional products of Uttar Pradesh** during his Varanasi visit.

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Key Points

- **GI Certified Products:**
  - **Varanasi:** Banarasi Tabla , Banarasi Stuffed Chilli, Shehnai , Metal Casting Craft, Mural Painting, Red Peda, Thandai, Tricolor Barfi, and Karonda of Chirgaon.
  - **Bareilly:** Bareilly furniture, Zari Zardosi, **Terracotta.**
  - **Mathura:** Mathura's Sanjhi Craft.
  - Products from other districts:
    - Kathia wheat of Bundelkhand,
    - Flute of Pilibhit,
    - Wood Craft of Chitrakoot,
    - Stone inlay work of Agra
    - Imarti of Jaunpur.
  - Uttar Pradesh has now become **the top state in India** with **77 GI tags.**
  - **The Kashi region** alone has **32 GI tagged products** , making it one of **the GI hubs of the world.**
- **Importance:**
  - **Getting legal protection** will stop counterfeit products and increase **the credibility of original producers in the market.**
  - **From an economic point of view**, GI tag will increase **the brand value of products** and **boost exports.**
  - **New employment opportunities** will be created at the local level.

Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

- A Geographical Indication (GI) tag is a **name or mark used on special products** that belong to a specific **geographical location or origin.**
- The GI tag ensures that only **authorised users or people residing in the geographical region** are allowed to use the name of a popular product.
- It also protects the product from being copied or imitated by others.
  - A registered GI tag is **valid for 10 years.**
- GI registration is overseen by the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade** under the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry.**
- **Legal Framework:**
  - It is regulated and guided by the **WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).**

Kathak Dancer Kumudini Lakhia Passed Away

Why in News?

On 12th April 2025, **Kathak artist and choreographer Kumudini Lakhia** passed away at the age of 95 due to age-related illness at her residence in Ahmedabad.

Key Points

- **About Kumudini Lakhia :**
  - **Kumudini Lakhia** , also known as **"Kumiben" , was among the artists who** blended **modern expressions, techniques, and themes** with the classical essence of the **traditional dance form**.
  - She was born on **17 May 1930 in Ahmedabad** (Gujarat) in a music-loving family.
  - She received her initial training in Kathak dance from **Pandit Sundar Prasad** of **the Jaipur Gharana.**
    - She also took training from the great dancer **Pandit Shambhu Maharaj of the Lucknow Gharana.**
  - During her training she also got the opportunity to work with **Pandit Birju Maharaj,** which further enriched her dance vision.
  - She exhibited her art not only in India but also in countries like **Europe** and **the United States.**
- **Establishment of Kadamba**
  - In 1964 she founded **the "Kadamba Dance and Music Center"** in **Ahmedabad.** Through this center she trained a new generation of Kathak dancers.
- **Awards and Honors**
  - **Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1982):** Honour given by India's National Academy for **contribution to classical dance.**
  - **Padma Shri (1987): Fourth highest civilian award** given by the Government of India.
  - **Padma Bhushan (2010): Third highest civilian award.**
  - **Kalidas Samman (2002): A prestigious cultural award** given by the Madhya Pradesh government.

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- **Padma Vibhushan (2025):** India's **second highest civilian award.**

Kathak

- **Introduction:**
  - The word Kathak is **derived from the word Katha** which literally **means to tell a story**. This dance is mainly performed in **Northern India**.
  - It was primarily a temple or village performance in which dancers narrated stories from ancient texts.
  - It is one of the **classical dances of India.**
- **Development :**
  - Kathak dance developed as a distinct form with the spread of the **Bhakti movement** in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.
  - The **legends of Radha-Krishna** were first enacted in folk dramas called **'Rasa Leela'**, which later incorporated folk dance with the original gestures of the Kathak storytellers.
  - Kathak was performed in **courts for the Mughal emperors and their nobles,** where it acquired its present characteristics and developed into a distinct style.
  - It developed into a major art form under the **patronage of Wajid Ali Shah, the last Nawab of Awadh.**
- **Dance Style:**
  - Usually a single narrator or dancer pauses for a period of time to recite the verses, which are then demonstrated through physical movements.
  - There is a greater focus on leg movements; body movements are skillfully controlled by dancers wearing 'ankle-bells' and performed with straight legs.
  - 'Tatkar' kathak basically involves the movement of the feet.
  - Kathak is the only form of classical dance that is related to Hindustani or North Indian music.
  - Some of the prominent dancers include Birju Maharaj, Sitara Devi.

Food Industry Upgradation Scheme

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh has secured **first place in the country in the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Micro Food Processing Enterprises Upgradation Scheme (PMFME).**

Key Points

- **About the issue:**
  - **The average loan approval** time in Uttar Pradesh is **101 days , while in Bihar it is 110 days** and in Telangana it is **190 days.**
  - Uttar Pradesh has recorded **a growth of 14 % in loan disbursement.**
  - Uttar Pradesh has **spent Rs 250 crore more than 2024.**
  - At the same time, an additional amount of Rs 300 crore has been provided **for Uttar Pradesh** with **an increase of 56 %** in **the budget for the year 2025-26.**

Pradhan Mantri Micro Food Processing Enterprises Upgradation Scheme (PMFME)

- **About:**
  - Launched in 2020 under the Atmanirbhar Abhiyaan , it aims to enhance the competitiveness of existing individual micro enterprises in the unorganised sector of the food processing industry and promote formalisation of the sector and provide support to Farmer Producer Organisations , Self Help Groups and Producer Cooperatives.
  - The scheme adopts One District One Product (ODOP) approach to leverage the benefits of scale with respect to procurement of inputs, common services and marketing of products.
  - The PMFME Scheme is currently being implemented in 35 States and Union Territories.
  - It was implemented for a period of five years (2020-21 to 2024-25).
- **Nodal Ministry:**
  - Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI).

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Shehnai Secures GI Tag

Why in News?

Varanasi's rich cultural and craft heritage gained national recognition as authorities recently granted Geographical Indication (GI) tags to **the Banarasi Shehnai, and the Banarasi Tabla**.

Key Points

- **Banarasi Shehnai:**

  - The Banaras Shehnai is a **traditional wind instrument** deeply rooted in the Banaras Gharana of Indian classical music.
  - It gained national prominence through Ustad Bismillah Khan, who famously played the shehnai at **the** Red Fort on India's first Independence Day.
  - The instrument holds a divine and auspicious status, often **performed at weddings, religious ceremonies, and temple rituals.**
  - It embodies the spiritual and artistic ethos of Varanasi, **contributing to the city's distinct cultural identity.**
- **Banarasi Tabla:**

  - The Banaras Tabla Gharana, **also known as the Purab Gharana**, represents a unique and influential school of tabla playing that originated in Varanasi (Banaras).
  - Known for its rhythmic sophistication and rich tonal clarity, this **gharana exhibits a strong pakhawaj influence**, setting it apart from other styles.
  - Its expressive and dynamic compositions make it especially well-suited for accompanying Kathak dance, a classical form also rooted in North India.
  - **The Banaras Gharana** is recognized as **one of the six principal tabla gharanas in Indian classical music.**
  - Renowned Exponents are **Pandit Anokhelal Mishra, Pandit Kishan Maharaj, Pandit Samta Prasad.**

Geographical Indication (GI) Tag

- **About:** A GI tag is a **name or sign used on certain products** that correspond to a specific geographical location or origin.
  - The GI tag ensures that only authorised users or those residing in the geographical territory are **allowed to use the popular product name.**
    - It also protects the product from being copied or imitated by others.
  - A registered GI is **valid for 10 years and can be renewed.**
  - GI registration is **overseen by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade** under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- **Legal Framework:**
  - Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999
  - WTO Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

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Annual Survey Of Industries 2024-25

Why in News?

According to the latest data of Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) of the Government of India, **Uttar Pradesh** has recorded **the highest number of factory registrations in the country** in the year **2024-25.**

Key Points

- **About the Report:**
  - Uttar Pradesh **registered 3,318 factories in 2024–25,** nearly double the 1,484 recorded in 2020–21.
    - This growth has been due to improvements in **ease of doing business , administrative efficiency** and **policy decisions.**
  - According to the report, Uttar Pradesh is rapidly emerging as a key hub for **large-scale industrial investments**, beyond just small and medium enterprises.
  - **UP's share in the ASI frame** has increased to 7.6% in the year 2022-23, the highest ever.
  - This progress is a strong step towards **the Chief Minister** 's goal of **a USD 1 trillion economy.**
  - **Uttar Pradesh's industrial Gross Value Added (GVA)** reached **Rs 1.3 lakh crore** in 2022-23 , **contributing 6.1% to the total industrial GVA of the country.**
    - GVA represents the value that producers **add to goods and services during the production process.**
    - **It is calculated by subtracting the cost of inputs (intermediate consumption) from** total output.
    - It **is a major component of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** , which reflects economic growth.
- GVA growth rates provide insights into sectoral performance, helping in economic analysis and policy making.

Annual Survey of Industries (ASI)

- ASI is the **primary source of industrial statistics** in India.
- It was **initiated in 1960** as per **the Collection of Statistics Act of 1953** , with the year **1959 as the base year** and has been **conducted annually since 1972.**
  - ASI has been conducting this survey since the year 2010-11 under the **Collection of Statistics Act, 2008** , which was **amended in the year 2017** to extend it to all India level.
- The **National Statistical Office (NSO)** , a part of the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)** , operates the ASI.
- The Department of Statistics and Programme Implementation is responsible for ensuring the coverage and quality of statistics released by the Ministry.

Uttar Pradesh Leading in PM Kusum Yojana

Why in News?

The Union Minister of Consumer Affairs praised Uttar Pradesh's leading role in effective implementation of the **PM Kusum Yojana** and **PM Surya Ghar Yojana**.

Key Points

- **PM-Kusum:**
  - **About:**
    - PM-KUSUM is a flagship scheme launched by the Government of India in the year 2019 with the primary objective of **transforming the agriculture sector by promoting solar energy solutions.**
    - It works on a demand-driven approach. Capacities are allocated based on **the demands received from various states and Union Territories (UTs).**
    - It aims to achieve a significant **solar power capacity addition of 30.8 GW by March 31, 2026.**

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- **Objective:**
  - The scheme aims **to reduce dependence on diesel** for irrigation by encouraging the use of **solar powered pumps and other renewable energy sources.**
- It aims to increase farmers' income **by reducing irrigation costs through the use of solar pumps** and enabling them to sell surplus solar energy to the grid.
  - By providing access to solar pumps and promoting **solar-based community irrigation projects , the scheme aims to enhance water and energy security for farmers.**
  - The scheme aims to reduce environmental pollution caused by conventional energy sources by adopting clean and renewable solar energy.
- **Ingredients:**
  - **Component-A : Installation of 10,000 MW decentralized ground/stilt mounted solar power plants** on barren/fallow/ pasture/marshy/cultivable lands of farmers.
  - **Component-B** : Installation of 20 lakh stand-alone solar pumps in off-grid areas.
  - **Component-C** : Solarisation of 15 lakh **grid connected agricultural pumps** : Individual pump solarisation and feeder level solarisation.
- **PM-Surya Ghar Free Electricity Scheme:**
  - **About:**
    - It is a central scheme to **promote the adoption of solar rooftop systems** by providing adequate financial **subsidy and ensuring ease of installation.**
  - **Aim:** It aims to provide **free electric power to one crore households** in India who wish to install power units with rooftop solar panels.
    - Families will be able to get 300 units of electricity free every month.
  - **Implementing Agencies:** The scheme will be implemented at two levels.
    - **National level:** Managed by **National Programme Implementation Agency (NPIA).**
    - **State level:** Managed by **State Implementation Agencies (SIA)**, which are the **distribution utilities (DISCOMs)** or electricity/energy departments of the respective states or union territories.
  - **Role of DISCOMs :** As SIA, DISCOMs are responsible for facilitating various measures towards promoting rooftop solar power transition , including ensuring availability of net meters , timely inspections and commissioning of installations.
  - **Subsidy Structure:** The scheme provides subsidy to defray the cost of solar rooftop system installation. The subsidy is limited to a maximum capacity of 3 kW.
    - 60% subsidy for solar systems up to 2 kW capacity.
    - 40% subsidy for solar systems between 2kW to 3kW capacity.

India Skills Report 2025

Why in News?

In the India Skills Report 2025, Uttar Pradesh has topped the country in the areas of mathematical skills and computer proficiency.

- The state has also made remarkable progress in **employment opportunities** and **ranking of cities.**

Key Points

- **About the Report:**
  - According to the report, **80% of the youth are proficient in mathematics and computer skills.**
  - In this case, Uttar Pradesh has secured **the first position, leaving behind Andhra Pradesh.**
    - **Madhya Pradesh, Punjab and Telangana** are at third, fourth and fifth positions respectively.
  - Uttar Pradesh is also ranked first in **critical thinking.**
    - After this, **Rajasthan is at second place** and **Madhya Pradesh** is at third place.

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- In the field of English proficiency, **Maharashtra has** secured first place, **Karnataka second** and **Uttar Pradesh third.**
  - These figures have emerged in **the Global Employability Test (GATE) report, which** evaluates **the job-ready skills of students and professionals across the world.**
- **Uttar Pradesh ranks first in the country** in terms of **availability of employment resources** for youth in **the age group of 18-25 years** , while the state has also secured **third position in the category of youth in the age group of 26-29 years.**
- **Uttar Pradesh is second** after Tamil Nadu as **the preferred state for internships.**
- **In total employment percentage, Maharashtra** (84%) is at first place, **Delhi** (78%) at second, **Karnataka** (75%) at third, **Andhra Pradesh** (72%) at fourth,
  - **Kerala** (71%) at fifth and **Uttar Pradesh** (70%) at sixth place.

Zero Poverty Programme

Why in News?

The Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh has announced that the 'Zero Poverty Programme' being launched in Uttar Pradesh will be known by the name of **Baba Saheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar.**

Key Points

- **About the Program:**
  - The objective of this program is that no person in Uttar Pradesh **should be deprived of basic facilities** and the poor and marginalized communities **should be linked to all government schemes.**
  - According to the Chief Minister this scheme is being named after **Baba Saheb Ambedkar because it was he who** presented the philosophy of **educational, social and economic upliftment.**
  - **In every Gram Panchayat, 20-25 such families** will be identified, who are still deprived of the facilities.
  - The state government will work to provide all the government facilities like **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana, toilets, drinking water, electricity, gas connection, Ayushman card, pension schemes** to such families.
    - In the first phase, **14-15 lakh families** will be included in the scheme.
    - The scheme will give special priority to **Musahar, Tharu, Vantangiya, Kol, Buksa, Chero, God and Saharia communities.**
  - The committee formed for the maintenance of **community toilets of Gram Panchayats** will get regular **monthly honorarium.**

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana–Gramin (PMAY-G)

- **Launch:** To achieve the objective of **"Housing for All"** by the year 2022 , the erstwhile rural housing scheme **Indira Awas Yojana (IAY)** was restructured into **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G)** as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme from 1 April 2016.
- **Ministry Involved:** Ministry of Rural Development.
- **Status:** States/UTs have **sanctioned 2.85 crore houses to the beneficiaries and 2.22 crore houses** have been completed till March 2023.

Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY

- Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) is the world's largest fully government -funded health insurance scheme.
- Launched in February 2018, the scheme provides a sum insured of **Rs 5 lakh per family for secondary as well as tertiary care.**

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- The health benefit package covers surgery, medication and daily treatment, cost of medications and diagnosis.

- It is an entitlement-based scheme that targets beneficiaries identified by the latest **Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) data.**
- **National Health Authority (NHA)** has provided flexibility to States/UTs to use non-SECC beneficiary family databases with similar socio-economic profiles for tagging against left out (unverified) SECC families.
- The scheme is funded jointly, **60:40 between the Centre and legislature** in case of all **States and Union Territories , 90:10 for North-Eastern States and Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand** and **100% central funding for Union Territories without a legislature.**

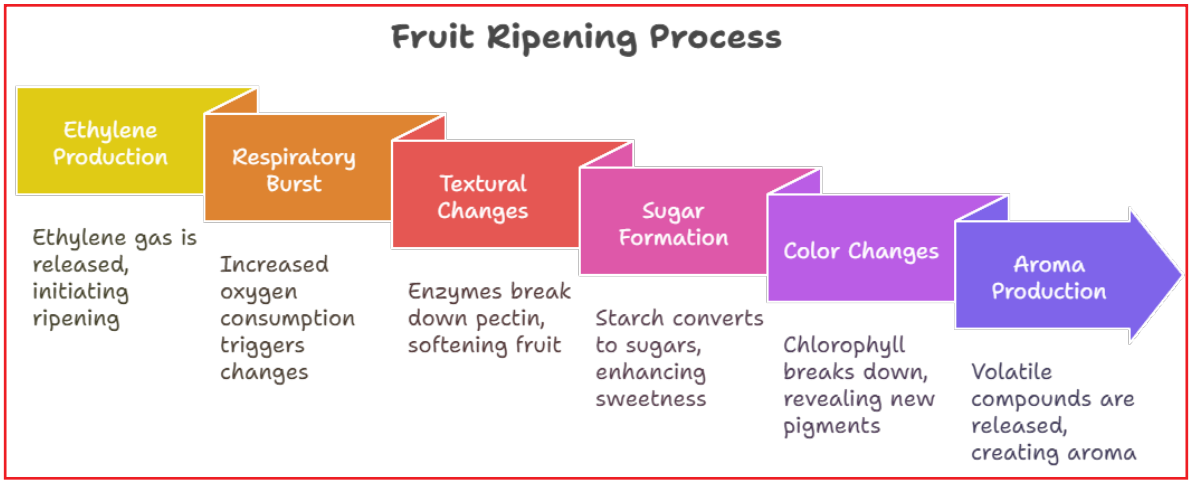
Fruit Development and Plant Hormones

Why in News?

Fruit ripening is the **final stage** and also facilitates **seed dispersal** as an integral part of the plant's **aging (senescence)** process.

Key Points

- **About Fruit Development and Plant Hormones:**
  - **Phases of Fruit Development:** Fruit development occurs in 3 stages:
    - **fruit set** (ovary growth begins after fertilization),
    - **fruit growth** (active cell division and expansion), and
    - **maturation** (fruit and seed reach full size).
    - This is followed by **ripening**, which improves edibility and aids in seed dispersal.
- **Process of Fruit Ripening:**



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- **Plant Hormones:**

PLANT HORMONES

HORMONE	FUNCTION	LOCATION
Gibberellins	Increase the speed of seed germination; promote stem elongation; induce early blooming of flowers; increase fruit size	Shoot and root apical meristems; seeds
Auxins	Stimulate stem elongation; control seedling orientation; stimulate root branching; promote fruit development	Apical meristems; immature plant tissue
Ethylene	Increases the speed at which fruit ripens; stimulates leaf dropping and the death of flowers	All parts of the plant including the fruits
Abscisic acid	Inhibits growth and reproduction; inhibits seed germination; stimulates closure of stomata	Leaves; fruits; root tips; seeds
Cytokinins	Cause rapid cell division, in conjunction with auxin; induce seed germination; initiate new branches from lateral buds	Roots and fruits, primarily

- **Substances Used for Artificial Fruit Ripening:**
  - **Calcium Carbide:** It releases **toxic acetylene gas** and may contain **phosphorus**, and **arsenic (a carcinogenic substance)**causing severe health issues.
    - Its usage has been **banned by FSSAI** under Food Safety and Standards Regulations, 2011.
  - **Permitted Substances:**
    - **Ethylene Gas:** Approved by FSSAI up to **100 ppm (parts per million)**; triggers natural ripening. It must be applied in **controlled ripening chambers** and **not in direct contact** with fruits.
    - **Ethephon:** Releases **ethylene on breakdown** and used for artificial ripening under regulated conditions.
    - **Ethereal:** It is an **ethylene-releasing compound** used in **controlled settings**.

Development Projects in Varanasi

Why in News?

The Prime Minister inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of **projects worth over Rs 3,880 crore** in **Varanasi.**

- These **projects include development works related to** various sectors.

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Key Points

- **About the Projects:**
  - Laid the foundation stone of road bridge between **Varanasi Ring Road and Sarnath,** flyovers at Bhikharipur and Manduadih and highway underpass road tunnel on NH-31 at **Varanasi International Airport.**
  - Improving the power infrastructure, **inaugurated two 400 Kilo-Volt (kV) and one 220 Kilo-Volt (kV) transmission substations** in Jaunpur, Chandauli and Ghazipur districts of Varanasi division.
  - Rural education was **improved with the addition of libraries and Anganwadi centres**, and the foundation was laid to upgrade primary schools under the **Smart City Mission**.
  - PM announced the creation of an Ekta Mall, a space where **diverse crafts and products from across India will be showcased under one roof** in Kashi.
  - More than **₹105 crore in bonuses were given to livestock-rearing families**, mostly women. These women are now known as **"Lakhpati Didis"**.
  - PM Modi also gave **Ayushman Vay Vandana cards** to senior citizens, ensuring **free healthcare for everyone above 70,** no matter their income.
    - Under **Ayushman Bharat Yojana**, many families in Uttar Pradesh have received free medical treatment.
- **Objective:**
  - These projects will accelerate **economic activities in** Varanasi and the surrounding Purvanchal region.
  - These projects aim to improve the infrastructure in Varanasi and surrounding areas, which will **not only improve the quality of life of common citizens but will also boost business, tourism and cultural heritage**.

Note: Over **30 local products** from Varanasi and surrounding districts now **carry the prestigious GI (Geographical Indication) tag**, including the famous thandai, red stuffed chilli, tiranga barfi and even Jaunpur's imarti and Pilibhit's flute.

Varanasi

- **Introduction**
  - Varanasi, also known as **Kashi** and **Banaras**, is a major and historical city of Uttar Pradesh.
  - This city is situated on the banks of River Ganga and **is considered** a very sacred and important pilgrimage site **in Hinduism.**
  - **The name Varanasi is derived from the names of** two local rivers, **Varuna River and Asi River**. These rivers join **the Ganges River from the north and south respectively.**
  - It is also a major pilgrimage site for Buddhists and Jains. **Gautam Buddha gave his first sermon at Sarnath (Banaras).**
  - Varanasi is revered in Hinduism as an " **Avimukta Kshetra ", where the soul attains liberation after dying.**
  - Varanasi is addressed with adjectives such as **"City of Temples", "City of Lights", "City of Knowledge".**
  - **The city is the centre of the Banaras Gharana** of Hindustani classical music.
    - Prominent musicians and artists from here include **Ustad Bismillah Khan, Pandit Ravi Shankar and Girija Devi.**
- **Education and Universities**:
  - There are four major universities in Varanasi:
    - **Banaras Hindu University**, **Mahatma Gandhi Kashi Vidyapeeth**, **Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies** and **Sampurnanand Sanskrit University**.
- **Tourist Places:**
  - Kashi Vishwanath Temple
  - Bharat Mata Mandir
  - Sarnath
  - Assi Ghat

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Rohin Barrage

Why in News?

Recently the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh inaugurated **the Rohin Barrage Project** in **Maharajganj.**

Key Points

- **About Barrage:**
  - **This project is an irrigation infrastructure project** run by the Uttar Pradesh government , which is considered very important for the farmers of eastern Uttar Pradesh.
  - The Rohin Barrage is about **86 metres long** and provides irrigation facilities on both its banks, which will directly benefit more than **7,000 hectares** of cultivable land. This area was till now dependent on rainfall or temporary water sources.
  - Five minor canals drawn from this barrage—**Ramnagar, Nakatoji, Watjagar, Siswa** and **Baulia** —will strengthen the irrigation system.
  - Through these canals, water supply for **both Rabi and Kharif crops can be ensured.**
  - This barrage has been constructed on **the Rohin river.**
  - This project will directly benefit **16,000 farmers.** Availability of water in regular and structured form will be ensured to these farmers.
  - Construction of the barrage will develop **a permanent canal system** and **water supply system** in the surrounding villages.

Rabi crop

- These crops **are sown during the retreating monsoon and northeastern monsoon seasons (October),** which are called rabi or winter crops.
- These crops are **generally harvested in the summer season during April and May.**
- The main Rabi crops are wheat, gram, peas, barley etc.
- Warm climate is required for germination of seeds **and cool climate is required for growth of crops.**

Kharif Crops:

- The crops sown during **the south-west monsoon season are called Kharif or monsoon crops.**
- These crops are **sown at the beginning of the season** from **late May** to **early June** and are harvested after **the monsoon rains** start in **October.**
- These crops depend on the rainfall pattern.
- **Rice, maize, pulses like urad, moong dal and bajra** are among the major Kharif crops.
- They require more water and warm weather to grow.

System for preventing theft Of Vehicle

Why in discussion?

Recently, **a special device** developed **by a scientist** of a **government college situated in Noida, Uttar Pradesh for tracking stolen vehicles** has been granted a patent by the Government of India.

Key Points

- This device is helpful in **finding and tracking** stolen vehicles. It has been named" **System for Preventing Theft of Vehicle ".**
- **In this, wireless chips** are installed in **three main parts** of the vehicle – **chassis** , **engine** and **number plate.**
- All these chips are connected to a **main controller**, which monitors the entire system.
- The chips are specially **coded** , allowing them to be **identified even if used elsewhere.**
- This system acts like **a Fastag reader and** helps **the police to confirm the stolen vehicle or its part.**
- As per NCRB report, **Delhi has** the highest incidence of **vehicle thefts in the country and this device** can make **a significant contribution** especially in such areas.

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National Crime Records Bureau

- **Introduction**
  - NCRB was established in the year 1986 under the Union Ministry of Home Affairs with the objective of empowering the Indian Police Service by providing information technology solutions and criminal intelligence to the police machinery for effective law enforcement.
    - It was established based on the recommendations of the National Police Commission (1977–1981) and the Home Ministry's Task Force (1985).
- **Work**
  - The Bureau is entrusted with the task of maintaining the National Database of Sexual Offenders (NDSO) and sharing it with the States/Union Territories on a regular basis.
  - NCRB has also been designated as the central nodal agency for managing the technical and operational functions of the 'Online Cyber-crime Reporting Portal' through which any citizen can lodge a complaint by uploading video clips as evidence of crime related to child pornography or rape/gang rape.
  - NCRB has also been given the responsibility of implementing the Inter-operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS) **project.**

Poverty Reduction Goals

Why in discussion?

The Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh has announced a plan to **eradicate poverty** in the state within three years. He stressed on providing housing, water and employment opportunities to all.

Key Points

- **About Poverty:**
  - Poverty is a condition or state in which an individual or community lacks the financial resources and goods necessary for **a minimum standard of living.** Poverty means that the level of income from employment is so low that basic human needs cannot be met.
  - **According to the World Bank,** poverty means a lack of well-being and involves many dimensions. It includes low income and the inability to obtain the basic goods and services needed to live with dignity.
    - Poverty also includes **low levels of health and education, poor access to clean water and sanitation, inadequate physical security, lack of voice, and inadequate capacity** and opportunity to improve one's life.
  - In 2018, about 8% of the world's workers and their families lived on less than **USD 1.90 per person per day (the international poverty line).**
- **Types of Poverty:**
  - **Absolute poverty:** a situation in which household income is below the level necessary to maintain basic living standards (food, shelter, housing). This situation makes it possible to make comparisons between different countries and over time.
    - First introduced in 1990, the "one dollar a day" poverty line measured absolute poverty by the standards of the world's poorest countries. In October 2015, the World Bank set it at $1.90 a day.
  - **Relative poverty:** It is defined from a social perspective, i.e. the standard of living compared to the economic standards of the surrounding population. It is therefore a measure of income inequality.
  - Relative poverty is usually measured as the percentage of the population whose income is below a certain ratio of the average income.
- **Estimation of poverty in India**
- Poverty in India is estimated by **the NITI Aayog** Task Force through the calculation of the poverty line based on data collected by the National Sample Survey Office under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI).

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- **The Alagh Committee (1979)** determined the poverty line based on the minimum daily requirement of 2400 and 2100 calories for an adult in rural and urban areas respectively.
- Subsequently, various committees; **Lakdawala Committee (1993), Tendulkar Committee (2009), Rangarajan Committee (2012)** estimated poverty.
- According to the Rangarajan Committee report (2014), **the poverty line is estimated as per capita monthly expenditure of Rs 1,407 in urban areas and Rs 972 in rural areas.**

ODOP 2.0 Policy

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has prepared a ODOP (One District One Product) 2.0 policy for the financial year 2025-26.

- This scheme will be linked to new dimensions like **branding**, **packaging**, **marketing** and **quality improvement** , so that its reach and effectiveness can increase even more.

Key Points

- **About the Scheme:**
  - The ODOP scheme will now be expanded into **statewide self-employment** , **skill development** , and **entrepreneurship.**
    - Budget allocation has been made **in various categories** for the year 2025-26 , which will ensure **effective implementation of the scheme.**
  - Separate plans have been prepared for **financing** , **skill upgradation** , and **toolkit distribution.**
  - **Successful entrepreneurs of the first phase will** now be provided with **a second loan facility** to take their business to the next level.
  - **Every district** will be given a target and the pending files will be renewed and sent to the banks **in the year 2024-25.**
    - Under the scheme, **approval and distribution of 20% of the annual target** will be ensured.
  - Under **ODOP 2.0, current schemes will be simplified** and **new projects** will be approved.
  - **The CFC (Common Facility Center)** projects under construction in **Unnao, Bijnor and Gonda will be operated.**
  - **Trainees will be selected** through **digital e-portal** and will be linked to **recognized training institutes.**
  - **With the help of sectoral experts,** efforts will be made to get ODOP products **recognised at national and international platforms.**
- **One District One Product (ODOP):**
  - This program has been implemented in all **the 75 districts of the state and has received appreciation not only at the national but also at the international level.**
  - This mission was launched by the Uttar Pradesh government in **January 2018.**

List of ODOP Products in Uttar Pradesh

No.	District	Product
1.	Agra	Leather products and all handicraft products made from stone/marble
2.	Amroha	Musical Instruments (Dholak) and Readymade Garments
3.	bagpat	Home Furnishing
4.	Bareilly	Zari-Zardozi and Bamboo Products/Golden Industry
5.	Gorakhpur	Terracotta and Readymade Garments
6.	Lucknow	Chikankari and Zari Zardosi
7.	Mahoba	Gaura Stone
8.	mirzapur	Carpet and Metal Industry
9.	Siddharthnagar	Black salt rice
10.	Varanasi	banarasi silk saree

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UP Police Portal Receives Scotch Award

Why in News?

The Investigation, Prosecution and Conviction Portal developed by **the Technical Services Unit of Uttar Pradesh Police** has been awarded **the Scotch Award**.

Key Points

- **About the Portal:**
  - This award has been given in **the Police and Security category.**
  - **The Investigation, Prosecution and Conviction Portal** has been developed by **the Technical Services Unit** of Uttar Pradesh Police.
  - This portal monitors **the investigation process** in cases related to **mafia, POCSO, rape** and other **heinous crimes.**
  - Through this, the work of **filing charge sheets on time** and **expediting the judicial process** is done.
  - **So far, 85,000 people have been convicted** through this portal and **more than 40,000 five-year old cases** have been settled.
- **Scotch Award:**
  - Established in the year 2003 by **the Scotch Group , it is an independent civilian award** given to individuals, projects and institutions that make significant contributions to **the sustainable development of India.**
  - This award is given especially to recognize outstanding work in **governance, finance, technology** and **social sectors.**

POCSO Act

- The **Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act** came into force on November 14, 2012, as a result of India's ratification of the **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** in the year 1992.
- This special law aims to address the crimes of sexual exploitation and sexual assault of children, which are either not specifically defined or adequately punished.
- The Act defines a child as any person below the age of 18 years. The Act prescribes punishment according to the severity of the offence.
- The Act was reviewed and amended in 2019 to provide for more stringent punishments, including the death penalty, in cases of sexual abuse of children, in order to prevent such crimes against children.
- The Government of India has also notified the POCSO Rules, 2020.

Women-Led Solar Shops in Uttar Pradesh

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh government** is going to launch 3,304 solar-powered shops under the **CM Yuva Sathi Yojana**, empowering women to independently run sustainable retail outlets.

Key Points

- **Empowering Women:**
  - The CM Yuva Sathi Yojana aims to **economically empower women by setting up solar-powered retail outlets** across Uttar Pradesh.
  - Selected **women will independently operate these shops**, gaining ownership and business autonomy.
- **District-Wise Selection and Implementation:**
  - Women entrepreneurs will be selected at the district level to manage the solar shops.
  - The scheme targets rural and semi-urban areas to enhance women's participation in local economies.
    - **Four solar shops** will be opened in **each of the 826 blocks** of the state.

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- Women will be linked to Distributed Renewable Energy (DRE) **products** like **solar freezer, solar cold storage, solar flour mill, solar dryer, solar food processing machine.**
- One woman will be appointed as **"Surya Sakhi" in** every **Gram Panchayat** and **10,000 Paryavaran Sakhis** will also be formed.
  - A solar manufacturing unit will be set up in **Lucknow.**
- The government will also provide **comprehensive training in shop management and solar equipment handling.**

Promoting Green Energy and Employment:

- The scheme **promotes clean energy** by reducing reliance on conventional electricity.
- **Lower operational costs and** renewable energy use make the project eco-friendly.
- Simultaneously, it fosters local employment and encourages participation in government entrepreneurship initiatives.

Uttar Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission (UPSRLM):

- Under the Mission, efforts are being made to provide **self-employment to women** through various business activities by linking them with self-help groups.

Uttar Pradesh State Rural Livelihood Mission (UPSRLM)

- UPSRLM was launched in May 2020 during the COVID-19 lockdown.
- The aim of this program is to appoint **58,000 BC Sakhis** in Uttar Pradesh.
- Currently there are **38,435 BC Sakhis working**, who have been trained and certified by the **Indian Institute of Banking and Finance (IIBF)**.
- This model has proven to be **a cost-effective and sustainable means of delivering financial services in areas where banking services** are limited or unavailable.
- BC Sakhis are provided a financial assistance of Rs 4,000 per month for the first six months to give stability to their banking business.

UP First Bio-CNG Plant

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh's first and the country's second waste-to-CNG plant is being set up in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh.

Key Points

About the Plant:

- This plant will produce bio-fuel (Bio-CNG) from **straw, poultry litter, cow dung and wet waste.**
- It will produce **21.5 tonnes of bio-CNG , 200 tonnes of organic manure** and **30 metric tonnes of briquettes per day.**
- It will be operated on **the** Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model**.**
- To supply biofuel, a pipeline will be laid in the area by **Adani Gas Limited.**
- This will result in **annual savings of about Rs 5 crore on waste disposal.**
- **About one-third of the city's waste** will be used in this plant.

Objective:

- Streamlining **waste management.**
- Promoting **renewable and clean energy sources.**
- Reducing **environmental pollution (especially caused by stubble burning).**
- **Making city gas supply** accessible and affordable.

Bio-CNG

- Bio-CNG , also known as **'Biomethane'**, is a **renewable and clean burning transportation fuel** produced through the conversion of biogas to natural gas quality.
- It is essentially purified biogas, made from the following organic waste materials:
  - **Agricultural waste:** crop residues, straw, manure
  - **Food waste:** spoiled food, leftovers
  - **Sewage sludge:** Solid waste from wastewater treatment plants

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15th Hockey Men's National Championship 2025

Why in News?

The 15th Men's National Championship 2025 is going to be held from 4 to 15 April at **the Major Dhyan Chand Hockey Stadium** in **Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh.**

Key Points

- **About the Championship:**
  - According to Hockey India, the tournament will follow the same **division-based format** that was followed in the Senior Women's National Championship.
  - The competition will include **promotion and relegation competitions** , with a total of 30 teams participating and divided into three divisions – **Division A, Division B and Division C.**
  - **Division A** is the highest level of the competition, where teams will compete for **the championship title. Division B** teams will play with the aim of gaining **promotion to Division A in the next season, while Division C** teams will fight to secure a place in Division B in the upcoming edition.

Major Dhyan Chand

- Major Dhyan Chand was a **field hockey player** who played **international hockey from the year 1926 to 1949.**
  - He was a three-time **Olympic gold medalist** , winning gold in the **1928, 1932, and 1936 Olympic editions.**
- His exceptional skills in the game earned him the **title of 'Hockey Wizard'**.
  - Dhyan Chand, along with his brother Roop Singh, contributed significantly to India's tally of 35 goals, leading to them being known as the 'Hockey Twins'.
  - **In the year 1934**, Dhyan Chand was honoured with the **captaincy of the Indian team.**
- Major Dhyan Chand **retired from the Army as a Major in the year 1956** and was awarded the **Padma Bhushan.**
- **National Sports Day** is celebrated every year on 29 August on the birth anniversary of Major Dhyan Chand to honour his contribution and promote sports culture.

First in Digital Transactions and DBT

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh has secured **first place** in the country in terms of **digital transactions.**

Key Points

- **About the issue:**
  - **Under the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) scheme,** the state government has transferred Rs 1,11,637 crore directly into the accounts of 9.08 crore beneficiaries through 207 schemes of 11 departments.
    - **This has not only brought transparency** in the system but has also resulted in saving of **Rs 10,000 crore** by eliminating middlemen.
  - Uttar Pradesh has now become the second largest economic contributor to the country with a 9.2% share in the country's **Gross Domestic Product (GDP).**
    - While the country's GDP growth rate was 9.6% in the year **2023-24, UP's growth rate was 11.6%.**
  - **According to the NITI Aayog report,** Uttar Pradesh has been declared a ' **front runner' in terms of 'fiscal position'.**
  - **The role of Unified Payments Interface (UPI)** was also important in this remarkable growth. Easy access to **digital banking , availability of internet in villages** and **financial awareness** further accelerated this progress.

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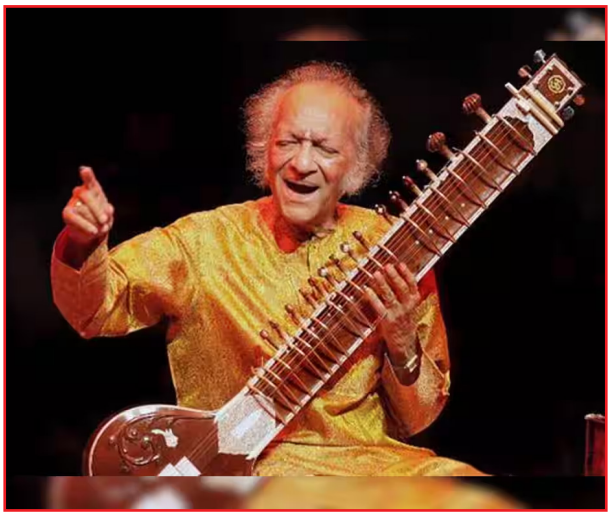
Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) Scheme

- **Objective :** The scheme is **designed to aid faster flow of information and funds** to the beneficiaries and to reduce fraud in the distribution system.
- **Implementation:** It was **launched by the Government of India on January 1, 2013** as a mission to reform the government delivery system.
  - The old version of the **Public Financial Management System (PFMS)** of the Accountant General's Office i.e. 'Central Plan Scheme Monitoring System' was chosen as a platform for direct benefit transfer.
- **Components of DBT:** The primary components for implementation of Direct Benefit Scheme include beneficiary account verification system; integrated, stable payment and settlement platform with RBI, NPCI, public and private sector banks, Regional Rural Banks and Co-operative Banks (viz. Core Banking Solution of banks, settlement systems of RBI and Aadhaar Payment System of NPCI etc.).
- **Aadhaar not mandatory:** Aadhaar is not mandatory in DBT schemes. Since Aadhaar provides unique identification and is useful in targeting the intended beneficiaries, Aadhaar is preferred and beneficiaries are encouraged to have Aadhaar.

Bharat Ratna Pandit Ravi Shankar Birth Anniversary

Why in News?

7th April 2025, marks **the 103rd birth anniversary** of sitar player and composer **Pandit Ravi Shankar.**



Key Points

- **About Pandit Ravi Shankar:**
  - Pandit Ravi Shankar, born on 7th April 1920 in **Varanasi ,** was a great sitarist and composer of **Indian classical music.**
  - His original name was **Ravindra Shankar Chowdhury** and he was the seventh son of his father **Shyam Shankar Chowdhury and mother Hemangini Devi.**
  - At the age of 18, he started learning sitar and took initiation from Ustad Allauddin Khan of Maihar.
  - He recomposed the famous song **"Saare Jahan Se Achcha" at the age of 25.**
  - He served as **the Music Director of All India Radio in New Delhi** from the year 1949 to 1956.
  - Subsequently, in the 1960s he taught and performed Indian classical music with violinists **Yehudi Menuhin and George Harrison,** helping to popularise it in the Western world.
  - Pandit Ravi Shankar introduced **Indian classical music to the western world.**
  - The **Beatles' George Harrison** described him as **the 'Godfather of World Music'.**

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- He was also a **nominated member of the Rajya Sabha from 1986 to 1992.**
- He died on December 11, 2012 at the age of 92.

Honours and Awards

- He was awarded the country's highest civilian honour, **Bharat Ratna, in 1999.** Apart from this, he **received many honours and awards, which include:**
  - **UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador (1999):** Appointed for cultural contributions.
  - **Padma Bhushan (1967):** India's third highest civilian award.
  - **Padma Vibhushan (1981):** Second highest civilian award for exceptional service.
  - **Kalidas Samman (1986):** Madhya Pradesh's premier award for excellence in Indian classical music.
  - **Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1987):** A mark of excellence in the field of music in India.
  - **Grammy Awards (four times):** Honoured in various categories, including a posthumous Lifetime Achievement Award in 2013.

Indian Classical Music

Introduction:

- Classical Indian music is a complex and ancient form of music with its roots in the Vedas, **the oldest texts of Hinduism**, dating back to around **1500 BCE.**
- It is divided into two main traditions: **Hindustani music** (prevalent in North India) and **Carnatic music** (popular in South India).

Historical Background:

- Indian classical music traces its origins to ancient texts such as the **Samaveda,** which shows its deep historical background and connection to Indian traditions.

Importance:

- Preserving the authenticity of the **Guru-Shishya tradition** (teacher-disciple tradition) in classical music has ensured the transfer of knowledge and skills from one generation to the next.
- Classical music follows a set of rules and conventions (such as the raga system, which has been passed down for generations) that have ensured the preservation of India's musical heritage.
- Classical music plays a role in uniting people from diverse backgrounds by acting as a common cultural thread. It has a role in promoting a sense of national unity through reducing regional, linguistic and religious barriers.
- Classical music includes a combination of various regional styles and instruments, which reflects the cultural diversity of India. This inclusiveness promotes harmony and coordination among different communities.

UP Fire Department Honored By Goa Government

Why in News?

On 1st April 2025, the Goa Government honored the **Uttar Pradesh Fire Department.**

Key Points

About the issue:

- The honour was presented by the Directorate of Fire and Emergency Services, Goa.
- This felicitation ceremony was **organised in Panaji**, the capital of Goa.
- This honour was given for excellent fire fighting and disaster management services in **Mahakumbh 2025 , Prayagraj.**

Achievements of the Fire Department:

- Controlled 185 fire incidents in 45 days, of which 24 were major fire incidents.
- Apart from this, about 86 small fire incidents were brought under control immediately.

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- Potential losses of approximately Rs 16.5 crore were averted.

Kumbh Mela

- In the year 2025 Maha Kumbh Mela was **held in Prayagraj from 13 January to 26 February 2025** attended by more than 66.30 crore devotees.
- The word ' Kumbh' is derived from the metal **'Kumbhaka' (sacred pot of the nectar of immortality).**
- King Harshavardhana of the **Pushyabhuti dynasty** started organizing the Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj.
- It is the **largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims** during which the participants take a bath or dip in the holy river. This congregation takes place at 4 different places, namely:
  - On the banks of **the** Ganga at Haridwar.
  - On the banks of **the** Shipra River in Ujjain.
  - On the banks of **the** Godavari (South Ganga) at Nasik.
  - At the **confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and the mythical invisible** Saraswati in Prayagraj.

Child Mortality Rate in Uttar Pradesh

Why in News?

According to the Annual Health Report (2024-25) released by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare , despite improvements in the past years, Uttar Pradesh is among the states with the highest **Child Mortality Rate in India.**

Key Points

- **About Child Mortality Rate:**
  - According to the report, 43 out of every 1,000 children in Uttar Pradesh die before their fifth birthday.
    - The current **Infant Mortality Rate (IMR)** is 38 per 1,000 live births, while **the Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR)** is 28.
  - According to **UNICEF India Report 2020**, about 46% of **maternal deaths** and 40% of neonatal deaths occur during delivery or within the first 24 hours after birth.
  - The leading causes of newborn deaths include **premature birth (35%), neonatal infections (33%), birth asphyxia (20%) and congenital malformations (9%).**
    - The annual report stated that Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka witnessed the **highest decline in under-five mortality rate**.
  - Uttar Pradesh had set a target to reduce its **maternal mortality rate (MMR)** to 140 per lakh live births by the year 2020 under its **Vision 2030 plan.**
  - **However, the Sample Registration System (SRS) report 2018-20,** published by **the Registrar General of India** in November 2022, showed that the MMR was 167 per lakh live births, which is higher than the national average of 97 per lakh live births.
  - **The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG)** report said that there was improvement in indicators such as institutional deliveries, neonatal mortality rate, infant mortality rate, and under-5 mortality rate from NFHS 4 (2015-16) to NFHS 5 (2019-21).
- **Causes of Child Mortality:**
  - **Septicemia** is a **major cause of death in newborns**, It is a serious bloodstream infection that can lead to sepsis, a life-threatening condition, and organ damage.
  - The state has a high rate of home deliveries, which is a major risk. The lack of trained midwives, poor hygiene, and the absence of medical professionals in home deliveries increase the risk of infection.
  - **Uttar Pradesh lacks access to health care in remote and under-served areas.** Lack of health care, such as lack of prenatal and postnatal care, increases infant mortality.
  - Although the government has introduced several initiatives like the **Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK)** and **Home-Based Newborn Care (HBNC)** to safeguard maternal and child health, the benefits of these schemes are not uniformly reaching all families.

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- As a result, the infant mortality rate remains high, particularly in remote and underserved regions.
- Malnutrition and climate change affect the health of children. This leads to an increase in infant mortality rate.
- Many families **lack awareness about infections** during delivery and baby care.

Anant Nagar Housing Scheme

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister launched **Anant Nagar Housing Scheme** of Lucknow Development Authority.

Key Points

- **About the Scheme:**
  - The cost of this scheme is Rs 6500 crore which is proposed in 785 acres.
  - Under this, one and a half lakh people will get residential facilities.
    - 10 thousand flats will be constructed on 60 plots.
  - Provision of housing for more than 25 thousand people has been made in 5 thousand buildings of **EWS (Economically Weaker Section) and LIG (Low Income Group) category.**
  - 3 thousand houses will also be constructed here under **the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.**
  - Apart from this, an education city will be developed in an area of 102 acres.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban (PMAY-U)

- **Launch:**
  - PMAY-U was **launched on June 25, 2015** with the main objective of **providing housing to the people of urban areas** by the year 2022.
- **Implementation:**
  - Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- **Features:**
  - It addresses the **urban housing shortage among the urban poor** (including slum dwellers) by ensuring proper housing for the eligible urban poor.
  - Under PMAY(U), basic amenities like **toilets, water supply, electricity and kitchen** are provided in all houses.
  - This scheme promotes women empowerment by providing ownership of houses in the name of the female member or in joint name.
  - Priority is given to persons with disabilities, senior citizens, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, Minorities , Single Women, Transgender and weaker sections of the society.

Sarnath Sculpture Style

Why in News?

During his visit to Thailand, Prime Minister Narendra Modi gifted a brass statue of Buddha in meditation posture, made in the Sarnath style, to King Maha Vajiralongkorn of Thailand.

- **About Sarnath Sculpture:**
  - **Origin and Development:**
    - The Sarnath style emerged during the Kushan period and reached its peak during the Gupta period.
  - **Naming:**
    - This style developed at Sarnath, where Buddha gave his famous 'Dharmachakra Pravartan' (first sermon).
    - As a result, this art style came to be known as 'Sarnath Style'.
  - **Construction Material:**
    - In ancient times, sandstone was mainly used for making statues. But nowadays, metals like brass are also being used along with stone, which has improved the structure and durability of the statues.
  - **Features:**
    - The Buddha statues of Sarnath art express a deep sense of peace and wisdom.
    - The Buddha idols have slanted eyes and sharp noses, with a gentle smile on their lips. The Sarnath style Buddha has a very gentle face.

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- The Buddha is depicted seated in the Dharmachakra Mudra (teaching posture), where his hands are in a position to turn the wheel of Dharma and impart teachings.
- These statues often depict the **"Abhanga Mudra"**, with the Buddha's body slightly tilted, giving an impression of movement and beauty.
- The halo behind the Buddha statue is often decorated with intricate floral patterns, which further enhance the grandeur and spiritual significance of the statue.

UP Became the First State in Ethanol Production

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh has **topped** the country in the field of **ethanol production**. In the last eight years, the **state has increased its production capacity to 2 billion liters per year** and a target is to increase it to 2.5 billion liters per year in the future.

Key Points

- **Benefits**:
  - Increase in ethanol production has led to better prices and increased income to sugarcane farmers. Ethanol production is leading to the establishment of new industries in the state, providing employment to thousands of people. This is boosting economic activities in rural and urban areas.
  - Promoting the use of **Ethanol-Blended Petrol (EBP)** will reduce dependence on petrol and diesel and also reduce pollution. Along with this, it will also help in achieving the target of **net-zero emission by the year 2070.**
  - **Asia's largest ethanol plant has been set up** in **Gonda district** and an ethanol production plant has also been set up at **Pipraich sugar mill in Gorakhpur.**
- **Biofuel Policy-2022** :
  - The state government prepared a well-planned Biofuel Policy-2022 to promote **Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP).**
  - The main objective of this policy is to **increase the income of farmers and make the environment clean.**
  - This policy is proving to be an important step towards transforming the state into a major hub of **biofuel.**

Ethanol

- Ethanol, also known as **ethyl alcohol, is a biofuel produced** from various sources such as sugarcane, corn, rice, wheat and biomass.
- **Molasses,** a by-product of sugar manufacture, is usually the main source for the production of **ethanol (anhydrous alcohol) and rectified spirit.** Molasses can be classified into the following categories:
  - **Grade A Molasses:** An intermediate by-product obtained from the initial sugar crystal extraction , containing 80–85 % dry matter (DM).
  - **B grade Jaggery:** Same DM content as A grade Jaggery but with less sugar and no spontaneous crystallisation.
  - **Class C Molasses (Blackstrap Molasses, Treacle):** The final by-product of sugar processing , containing significant amounts of sucrose (about 32% to 42%). It does not crystallize and is used as a commercial feed ingredient in either liquid or dry form.
- The production process involves the fermentation of sugars by yeast or through petrochemical processes such as ethylene hydration.
- Ethanol is 99.9% pure alcohol that can be blended with petrol to create a clean fuel option.

Mathura Heritage Corridor Project

Why in News?

After Ayodhya and Kashi, the Uttar Pradesh government has now decided to build **a heritage corridor in Mathura.**

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Key Points

- **About the Corridor:**
  - Its main objective is to promote **tourism** and improve regional connectivity.
  - A 6 km long mini link expressway will be built to connect **Banke Bihari temple** with **Yamuna Expressway** , which will make travelling in Mathura and its surrounding areas more convenient and accessible.
  - Important constructions like **convention centre, art institute, yoga and naturopathy centre , hospital, resort and electric bus depot** will be there in the corridor.
  - This will help in making Mathura not only a spiritual destination but also a major centre for cultural and health tourism.

Mathura

- **Introduction:**
  - Mathura district, located in Agra division, is situated on the **banks of river Yamuna.**
  - This district borders Aligarh in the north-east, Hathras in the south-east, Agra in the south, Rajasthan in the west and Haryana in the north-west.
  - Mathura is a **major Hindu pilgrimage site** and is believed to be the **birthplace and hometown of Lord Krishna.**
- **History :**
  - The oldest mention of Mathura is in the **Indian epic Ramayana**. In this, Mathura is called Madhupur or the city of Madhudanav and it is said to be the capital of Lavanasur.
  - Mathura became the capital of **the Surasena Empire in the 6th century BCE.**
  - **Megasthenes** mentioned Mathura by the name " Methora " in the 3rd century BCE.
  - **The Kushans** made Mathura their capital. Art and culture flourished in Mathura under the Kushan Empire.
- **Mathura Refinery:**
  - It is the **sixth refinery of IndianOil,** commissioned in 1982 with a capacity of 6.0 MMTPA to meet the growing demand for petroleum products in the north-western region of the country.
  - National Research Institute on Goat: Located at Makhdoom, Mathura.
  - One District One Product: Sanitary Fittings
  - Scenic Spots
    - Mathura Museum
    - Krishna's birthplace
    - Dwarkadhish Temple
    - Bankebihari Temple
    - Govardhan

National Junior Girls Handball Championship

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh won **the 47th National Junior Girls Handball Championship.**

Key Points

- **About the Championship:**
  - Uttar Pradesh won the title of this championship **for the first time.**
  - Uttar Pradesh **defeated Himachal Pradesh in the final.**
  - This championship was organized from 26 to 30 March 2025 **at K.D. Singh Babu Stadium in Lucknow**.
  - It was organised on the occasion of the **50th foundation day of Uttar Pradesh Handball Association.**
- **Handball:**
  - It is an **indoor game** , consisting of two teams and each team has seven players.
  - Handball originated in **Scandinavia** and **Germany** in the late 19th century.
  - Earlier it was an outdoor game and was known as **'Field Handball'**. Later, **G. Wallstrom** introduced indoor handball in **Sweden in 1910.**
    - Between 1938 and 1966, separate world championships were held for both formats of handball, but from 1967 onwards the world championship was held only for indoor handball.

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- Handball was included in the Olympics only once as an exhibition sport in Berlin in 1936, while it was officially included as an **Olympic sport in Munich in 1972.**
  - Women's handball was included in the Olympics in 1976.

Techkriti 2025

Why in News?

Asia's largest inter-college technology and **entrepreneurship festival ' Techkriti'** was **organised in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh** from 27 to 30 March 2025.

Key Points

- **Techkriti Festival:**
  - It is the annual technical and entrepreneurship festival of the **Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur**, **started in the year 1995.**
  - The main objective of this festival is to inspire students in the field of **science, technology and innovation** , so that they can move forward with new thoughts and ideology.
  - In the year 2000, the festival also expanded to include startups, entrepreneurship and workshops, resulting in the festival becoming a broader and more diverse technology festival.
- **Address and Theme:**
  - **The festival** was inaugurated by **CDS General Anil Chauhan.**
  - He highlighted the need for advancement and modernisation of the Indian Armed Forces and focused on areas such as cyber, **Artificial intelligence (AI), quantum technology and cognitive as challenges in future wars.**
  - The theme of this year's festival was " **Panta Rei"** (Everything Flows).
- **Rakshakkriti: Defense Expo**
  - A **special defence exhibition** was held, showcasing future military technologies.
  - The exhibition **showcased AI-based warfare systems, autonomous drones and indigenous defence innovations.**
  - India's commitment to move towards **'Atmanirbhar Bharat'** and reduce foreign defence dependence was reiterated.

Artificial Intelligence

- **Introduction:**
  - AI refers to the **ability of computers or computer-controlled robots to perform tasks that are normally performed by humans** because such tasks require human intelligence and judgment.
  - Although there are **currently no AI systems that can perform a wide variety of tasks that a normal human can perform,** some AI may be able to perform certain specific tasks that humans perform.
- **Features and components:**
  - **Deep learning (DL) technology** enables automatic learning through large amounts of unstructured data such as text, images, or videos.
  - The ideal characteristic of artificial intelligence is its ability to take rational actions that achieve a specific goal. **Machine learning (ML)** is a type of AI.
- **Types of AI:**
  - **Weak AI or narrow AI-** This AI is designed for specific tasks such as playing chess, recognizing faces or making recommendations. Examples include Siri, Watson, AlphaGo.
  - **General AI-** The ability to perform any intellectual task a human can, including reasoning, learning, and planning. No current example, but researchers are working on it.
  - **Super AI-** Hypothetical AI that exceeds human intelligence, excelling at tasks involving cognitive abilities such as creativity, self-awareness, and emotion. No current examples, only future possibilities.

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Ahaetulla Longirostris Snake

Why in News?

A rare snake, **Ahaetulla longirostris (long-snouted vine snake),** was discovered in Dudhwa Tiger Reserve in Uttar Pradesh.

Key Points

- **About the snake:**
  - It was discovered during a rhino shifting operation in the Palia division of Dudhwa Tiger Reserve.
  - Earlier this snake was found only in the forests of Valmiki Tiger Reserve **in West Champaran, Bihar.**
- **Features:**
  - Its body is **long, slender, and green or brown in color,** which distinguishes it from other snakes.
  - Its **long nose (rostral)** is also a major identification mark.
  - It mainly lives on trees and can easily hide among the branches and leaves.
  - It is mildly poisonous, its poison is not very dangerous for humans.
  - Family: **Colubridae**

Dudhwa Tiger Reserve

- It represents the best natural forests and grasslands in the Terai region of Uttar Pradesh, **located on the Indo-Nepal border in the Lakhimpur-Kheri district** of Uttar Pradesh.
- The reserve is known for its rich biodiversity, home to a wide variety of flora and fauna including the **Bengal tiger, Indian rhinoceros, swamp deer, leopard and several species of birds.**
- The **Terai Arc Landscape (TAL)** includes three important protected areas:
  - Dudhwa National Park
  - Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary
  - Katarnia Ghat Wildlife Sanctuary
- The three protected areas have been combined as Dudhwa Tiger Reserve under Project Tiger, being the last viable home of the Royal Bengal Tiger in the state.
- Dudhwa National Park and **Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary** were included in the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve in the year 1987 and Katarnia Wildlife Sanctuary was included in the year 2000.

India-Nepal Literature Festival

Why in News?

A three-day **India-Nepal Literature Festival** was organised in **Vrindavan (Mathura), Uttar Pradesh.**

Key Points

- **About the festival:**
  - The event was **organised by Geeta Shodh Sansthan**, an affiliate of Uttar Pradesh **Braj Teerth Vikas Parishad, and Krantidhara Sahitya Academy, Meerut.**
  - More than **180 litterateurs, writers, journalists and educationists** from India and Nepal **participated** in this festival.
  - The main objective of this festival was to **promote and enhance the literary and cultural heritage of both the countries.**
- **Importance:**
  - The exchange of literature and culture was encouraged.
  - Cooperation between the litterateurs of India and Nepal was promoted.

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- Traditional and contemporary literature got a new direction.

India-Nepal relations

- As neighbours, **India and Nepal share a unique relationship of friendship and cooperation** , characterized by **an open border**, kinship between the people of the two countries and strong cultural ties.
- India contributes nearly two-thirds of **Nepal's merchandise trade and nearly one-third of its services trade.**
- Battalion level joint military exercise, '**Surya Kiran**' , is conducted on rotation basis in both India and Nepal.
- India assisted Nepal mainly by upgrading 10 roads in the Terai region , establishing cross-border rail links at Jogbani-Biratnagar and Jaynagar-Bardibas, and setting up integrated check posts at major locations like Birgunj, Biratnagar, Bhairahawa and Nepalgunj.
- India has signed three sister-city agreements to connect **Kathmandu-Varanasi, Lumbini-Bodh Gaya** and **Janakpur-Ayodhya.**

Agrivoltaic Project

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh has become the first state in India to adopt an **'Agrivoltaic' project.**

Key Points

- **Agrivoltaic System:**
  - Agrivoltaic systems, also known as **agri-voltaic systems or "solar-farming"**, are a new technology that allows farmers to **produce electricity while growing their crops.**
  - In this system, solar panels are installed on agricultural land using **photo-voltaic (PV) technology.**
  - This technology was first introduced by **Adolf Goetzberger** and **Armin Zastrow in 1981.**
    - Its **prototype was developed in Japan in 2004** and after several trials, **it was implemented in East Africa in 2022.**
  - Presently it is being used successfully in countries like India, America, France, Britain and Germany.
    - However, this technology is still in its initial stages in India.
- **Benefit:**
  - Addressing the problems of growing energy demand and food security.
  - Solar panels reduce evaporation from crops and improve water utilization.
  - Solar panels protect crops from high temperatures and **UV rays.**
  - Solar energy reduces the cost of electricity and increases the income of farmers.
  - Rain water collected by solar panels and used for **irrigation**.
- **Challenges:**
  - It is a land-based system, requiring about two hectares of land per megawatt generated.
  - During the rainy season when the sky is cloudy, this system is not as effective, and farmers have to rely on alternative energy sources.
  - The shade produced by solar panels can sometimes cause plant pests, requiring attention to crops.
- **Funding from ADB:**
  - The Department of **Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance** has approved the technical assistance proposal of the State Government titled "Demonstration of Agrivoltaic Projects in Uttar Pradesh".
  - Under this, technical assistance of USD 0.50 million (about Rs 4.15 crore) has been approved from **the Asian Development Bank (ADB).**
  - Uttar Pradesh has become the first state in the country to receive this type of financial assistance from ADB.
- **Importance:**
  - Under this project, solar energy is also produced along with agricultural production on the same land.
  - This will provide additional income to farmers, increase energy production and promote **sustainable development.**

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- This initiative is an important step towards clean energy production, environmental protection and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Asian Development Bank

- **Introduction:** ADB is a regional development bank established in 1966 with the objective of promoting social and economic development in Asia and the Pacific region.
  - ADB assists its members and partners by providing **loans, technical assistance, grants, and equity investments to promote social and economic development.**
- **Headquarters:** Manila, Philippines
- **Members:** It currently has 68 members, of which 49 are from within the Asia and Pacific region and 19 from other regions.
- **ADB and India: India is a founding member** of ADB and the bank's **fourth largest shareholder.**
  - Supports India's priorities for strong, climate resilient, and inclusive growth, in line with **ADB's Strategy 2030 and the Country Partnership Strategy 2023-2027.**

Increased Solar Energy Production in Uttar Pradesh

Why in News?

Recently the **Uttar Pradesh government** announced that **solar power generation in the state has increased 10 times** in the last 8 years.

Key Points

- **About the issue:**
  - **The Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Development Agency (UPNEDA)** shared this information to mark the completion of eight years of the current government.
  - The total installed capacity of solar power in the state was **288 MW in** the year **2017** , which is expected to increase to **2653 MW** in **2025.**
- **Efforts of Uttar Pradesh in the field of solar energy:**
  - **Solar Energy Policy – 2022** :
    - Target to produce 22 thousand MW of solar energy in 5 years.
    - This policy has been made with the **aim of reducing dependence on fossil fuels in future.**
  - **Solar Power Park in Bundelkhand** :
    - A solar park of 4,000 MW capacity is being developed in the Bundelkhand region.
    - Development of 800 MW solar projects in Chitrakoot, Banda and other areas.
  - **Rooftop and Floating Solar Plants** :
    - **508 MW solar rooftop** projects have been installed on the rooftops of houses.
- Under this scheme, subsidies are being provided to the people of the state by the Uttar Pradesh government and the central government.
  - **Uttar Pradesh ranks third in solar rooftop installations** after Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- The **state's first floating solar plant has been installed in Dibiyapur of Auraiya** and a floating solar plant of 1 GW capacity is being installed in Lalitpur.

Solar Energy

- Solar energy, known as energy obtained from the sun, is a clean and renewable energy source. It is harnessed through solar technology, which is mainly of two types:
  - **Solar Thermal :** In this the heat of the sun is used to heat water.
  - **Solar Photovoltaic (PV) :** It uses the photovoltaic effect to convert the sun's rays into electrical energy.
- **Use of solar energy:**
  - Solar technologies are scalable and flexible, capable of powering entire cities through solar farms.
  - Electricity can be supplied even to remote areas through decentralized systems.
  - Homes and commercial buildings can be provided with energy by installing solar panels on rooftops.
    - **Example : Cochin International Airport** is one such example where solar energy is being used effectively.

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- **Importance:**
  - Reduction in **dependence on fossil fuels.**
  - Reducing **carbon emissions.**
  - Improvement in **air quality.**
  - Promote energy **access and security.**

Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Development Agency

- The Uttar Pradesh Government established the Alternative Energy Development Institute in April 1983, functioning as an autonomous body.
- Later the name of this organization was changed to **Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Development Agency (UPNEDA).**
- This agency also acts as **the state nodal agency** for the implementation of various schemes in the state.

Startup Ecosystem Report 2025

Why in News?

According to the **Startup Ecosystem Report-2025,** Uttar Pradesh has ranked 3rd in the country's startup ecosystem, where **26 startups** have achieved **unicorn status.**

Key Points

- **About:**
  - According to the report, Uttar Pradesh has made remarkable progress in its **startup ecosystem.** As a result, over **14,000 startups** have emerged in the state.
  - Uttar Pradesh has become **the first state in the country** where startups are active in **49 districts.**
  - Earlier, the centre of startups was only in big cities like **Noida, Ghaziabad, Lucknow** and **Kanpur**, but now they are growing rapidly in smaller cities as well.
- **Top 10 Startup Hub Cities of Uttar Pradesh:**
  - Among the **top 10 startup hub cities** of **Uttar Pradesh , Noida** leads the list with **3418 startups** , followed by **Lucknow** with **1789** , **Ghaziabad** with **1582** , and **Kanpur** with **586 startups**.
  - There are **406 startups** active in **Varanasi** , **359** in **Agra** , **291** in **Meerut** , and 283 in **Prayagraj.** At the same time **201 startups** are active in **Gorakhpur** and 177 in **Bareilly.**
- **Contribution of Uttar Pradesh to the Country:**
  - Uttar Pradesh **contributes 9.6%** of the total recognized startups in India.
  - Despite lagging slightly behind **Delhi (10%)** and **Karnataka (10.6%)**, Uttar Pradesh's rapidly growing share could soon take it to the second spot.

Unicorn

- **Introduction:**
  - A unicorn is any **privately owned firm** with a market capitalization of over **USD 1 billion.**
  - This reflects the emergence of new entities dedicated to offering **creative solutions and new business models,** among other products/services.
  - **Its various categories include FinTech, EdTech, Business-to-Business (B2B) companies**, etc.
- **features:**
  - **Divisive Innovation:** Almost all unicorns have brought innovation in the sector they belong to, **for example** 'Uber' has changed the face of commuting.
  - **Technology Driven:** This business model is driven by the latest technological innovations and trends.
  - **Consumer-Centric:** Their aim is to simplify tasks for consumers and become a part of their everyday lives.
  - **Private Ownership:** Most unicorns are privately owned, their valuation increases further when an established company invests in them.
  - **Software-Based:** A recent report shows that 87% of Unicorns' products are software, 7% are hardware and the remaining 6% are other products and services.

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Bithoor Festival 2025

Why in News?

Bithoor Mahotsav was organised in **Kanpur , Uttar Pradesh** from **21st to 23rd March, 2025.**

Key Points

- **About:**
  - This festival is organised every year at **Bithoor, the historical and mythological place of Kanpur.**
  - The festival will showcase the glorious history of the **Revolution of 1857** along with fascinating presentations of **imagery, theatre, music, drama** and **various cultures.**
  - This year **(2025)** festival was based on the **shared culture** and **historical heritage** of **Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra.**
- **Role of Bithoor in the Revolution of 1857:**
  - **Located in Kanpur district** of Uttar Pradesh, this town was deeply associated with **the First War of Independence of 1857.**
  - **The Siege of Kanpur (5 - 25 June 1857)** began near Bithoor Fort. **Nana Saheb,** the adopted son of the Maratha Peshwa **Baji Rao II, was exiled** to Bithoor by the British. His fort became the **headquarters of the rebellion's strategy.**
  - The prominent heroes of the freedom struggle, **Nana Saheb, Ramchandra Pandurang and Tatya Tope** started their struggle against British rule from Bithoor.
  - On **19th July 1857 , British General Havelock** captured Bithoor. After this, the British **set fire to the Bithoor fort, ghats and many temples.**
    - In this tragedy, **Nana Saheb's 14-year-old daughter, Mainavati** , was martyred by burning in the fire. In her **memory, a road in Kanpur** was named **'Mainavati Marg'.**

Nation's First Textile Machine Park

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Minister has announced that the country's **first textile machine park** will be set up on **875 acres of land** near Kanpur.

Key Points

- **About the Park:**
  - This park will be developed **in Chaparghata village of Bhongaon area near Kanpur.**
  - This park will be developed on **the PPP (Public-Private Partnership) model , which will reduce dependence on imports** and give a boost to **the Make in India initiative.**
  - The park aims to indigenously manufacture **machines used in the textile industry , which** are currently imported from countries like **China, Vietnam, South Korea, Taiwan and Europe.**
  - **More than 200 large and medium units** will be set up under this project , which will provide **employment to about 1.5 lakh people.**
  - **Apart from this, exports worth up to Rs 30,000 crore** are expected from this park.
  - Till now India used to import **circular knitting machines, flat knitting machines, diving machines, printing machines, sewing machines, patient gown machines and technical textile machines, but now these will be manufactured in Uttar Pradesh itself.**
  - This **will not only reduce the cost of machines by 40%** but **technical experts will also be trained locally for their repair and maintenance.**
- **Textile Sector in Uttar Pradesh:**
  - **The Uttar Pradesh government is making rapid progress** in the textile sector. **Banarasi silk, chikankari, handloom and powerloom** industries are quite famous here.
  - The government has taken several initiatives under **the Textile and Apparel Policy-2022 to strengthen the textile industry** and develop the state as **a textile hub.**
  - Under this, 10 new textile parks are being established **in 10 districts of the state including PM Mitra Park near Lucknow.**
  - **India's textile market** is expected to reach USD 350 billion by the year 2030.

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Make in India Initiative

- **Introduction:**
  - This campaign was **launched in the year 2014** to facilitate investments, promote innovation and skill development, protect intellectual property and build the best manufacturing infrastructure.
  - It is led by **the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.
  - This initiative is an open invitation to potential investors and partners from across the world to participate in the growth story of **'New India'.**
  - Make in India has achieved significant success in 27 sectors, including **strategic areas of manufacturing and services.**
- **Objective:**
  - Attracting foreign investment for new industrialisation and developing the existing industrial base in India to overtake China.
  - Target to increase **manufacturing sector growth to 12-14% annually** in the medium term.
  - To increase the share of the manufacturing sector in the country's GDP from 16% to 25% by the year 2022.
  - To create **100 million additional jobs by the year 2022.**
  - Promoting export-led growth.

Dolphin Safari in Varanasi

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh government announced to set up **a dolphin safari in Varanasi.**

Key Points

- **About Safari:**
  - This safari will be established between **Kaithi and Dhakhwa village of Varanasi district.**
  - The highest number of dolphins is seen in this area.
  - The Uttar Pradesh government has appointed 'Dolphin Mitras' for **dolphin conservation in the Ganga River** in Varanasi district.
- **Objective:**
  - **The objective of this safari is** to promote the increase in the number of **Gangetic dolphins** in the Ganga river and to ensure the protection of their natural habitat. Apart from this, **eco-tourism** is also encouraged.
  - To educate people about **the importance of dolphin conservation with the help of 'Dolphin Mitra' and the Forest Department.**

Ganges River Dolphin

- **Introduction:**
  - The **Ganges river dolphin (Platanista gangetica),** also known as the **" Tiger of the Ganges "**, was officially **discovered in the year 1801.**
  - The Ganges river dolphin is found mainly in the **major river systems (Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna and Karnaphuli-Sangu**) of India, Nepal and Bangladesh.
  - According to recent studies, various species have been recorded in the Ganga river basin from the main stream of Ganga river and subsequently from its tributaries - **Ghaghra, Kosi, Gandak, Chambal, Rupnarayan and Yamuna.**
- **Features:**
  - Ganges river dolphins can **only live in freshwater sources** and are essentially blind. They scare fish and other prey by **emitting ultrasonic sounds** , which helps them "see" an image in their mind and thus hunt.
  - They are often found alone or in small groups, and usually a female dolphin and a baby dolphin travel together.
  - Females are larger in size than males and give birth only once every two to three years.
  - Being a mammal, the Ganges river dolphin cannot breathe underwater and must surface every 30–120 seconds.
  - This creature is popularly called 'Sons' or Susuk because of the sound it makes while breathing.

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- **Importance:**
  - These are of immense importance as they are a reliable indicator of the health of the entire river ecosystem.
  - The Government of India declared it as **the National Aquatic Animal in the year 2009.**
  - It is also the **state aquatic animal of Assam.**
- **Protection status:**
  - International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN): Endangered
  - Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972: Schedule I
  - Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES): Appendix I
  - Convention on Migratory Species (CMS): Appendix 1
- **Related Government Initiatives:**
  - Project Dolphin
  - Vikramshila Ganga Dolphin Sanctuary has been established in Bihar.
  - **National Ganges River Dolphin Day (October 5)**

Neja Fair

Why in News?

Recently the Uttar Pradesh administration has banned **the Neja fair** held in **Sambhal.**

Key Points

- **About the fair:**
  - **This fair is organised in the memory of Syed Salar Masood Ghazi, nephew and commander of foreign invader Mahmud Ghaznavi.**
    - The tomb of Abdul Salar Ghazi is located in **Bahraich district of Uttar Pradesh , which** was built by **Firoz Shah Tughlaq.**
  - According to historians, many soldiers of Ghaznavi's army were killed in the conflict between **Prithviraj Chauhan** and **Mahmud Ghaznavi.**
  - The tombs of these soldiers were built in **Sambhal** , which later became a centre of faith for the devotees. Later, Neja fairs started being organised at these places.
    - It is noteworthy that **Sambhal** was the capital of Prithviraj Chauhan.
- **Reason for Ban:**
  - Mahmud Ghaznavi **invaded India 17 times between 1000 and 1027 AD** and **destroyed many Hindu religious places including the Somnath temple.** His commander **Syed Salar Masood Ghazi** is considered the main architect of these invasions.
  - In such a situation, it is **not appropriate to organise a fair in the memory of a robber and murderer.**
  - The historical background of the fair **is linked to foreign invaders** , hence it **can cause communal tension**.

Government Digitech Awards 2025

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh was awarded **5 awards** in various categories of **digital governance** at **the ET Government Digitech Awards** held in New Delhi on 18th March, 2025.

Key Points

- **The awards received by Uttar Pradesh:**
  - **Best use of AI/ML, Data Analytics and emerging technologies in public services**
    - **Recipient:** Prayagraj Smart City Limited and UP Police
    - **Reason:** To use **AI-based surveillance and crowd management system** during **Maha Kumbh 2025**.
  - **Excellence in Smart Mobility and Transportation Technologies**
    - **Recipient:** Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC)
    - **Reason:** To ensure **comprehensive safety** through **Vehicle Location Tracking Device (VLTD) and Panic Button.**
  - **Innovative Digital Health Services and Public Health Data Analytics**

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- **Recipient:** Hamirpur District Administration
- **Reason:** For **'Project Jagriti, TB Free Hamirpur' initiative.**

- **Innovative use of digital technology in enhancing public service delivery**
  - **Recipient:** UP Development Systems Corporation Limited (UPDESCO)
  - **Reason:** For effective use of digital technology under **Swami Vivekananda Yuva Sashaktikaran Yojana.**
- **Innovations in Digital Governance**
  - **Recipient:** Government of Uttar Pradesh
  - **Reason:** To improve administrative functions through various **digital initiatives and technological upgradation.**

- **About Government Digitech Awards**:
  - **The ET Government Digitech Awards** is supported by **the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology.**
  - These awards recognise pioneers who have played a key role in shaping **the digital transformation in public services.**
  - **30 winners from across India** were felicitated at the event. Several states including **Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Bihar, Telangana, Odisha, Kerala, Tripura, West Bengal and Haryana** were also awarded in various categories.

Digital Governance

- **About:**
  - Digital governance is a **framework for establishing accountability, roles, and decision-making authority** for an organization's digital presence.
  - This includes the organization's **websites, mobile sites, social media channels , and other Internet-based services.**
- **Importance:**
  - Digital governance ensures clear decision-making processes in organizations.
  - It **coordinates design, materials, technical infrastructure, security and financing** through effective management.
  - A strong governance framework reduces unnecessary debates over an organisation's digital presence and enhances public trust through improved services, stronger organisational performance and effective customer experience.

Zaid Crops Under Kisan Credit Card (KCC)

Why in News?

On 19th March 2025, the Uttar Pradesh government decided to include **9 zaid crops** under **Kisan Credit Card (KCC)** and **Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY).**

Key Points

- **About Zaid Crops:**
  - **Zaid crops** are those crops which are grown in the period between **Rabi and Kharif** seasons. These crops have greater **ability to tolerate intense heat and dry winds.**
  - **Major zaid** crops include crops like **cucumber, pumpkin, bitter gourd, watermelon, cucumber, sugarcane and peanut.**
    - In North India, **zaid crop is** usually sown in **March-April.**
  - Farmers will now be able to avail the benefits of **KCC and crop insurance scheme** for crops like **groundnut, maize, green gram, urad, papaya, litchi, watermelon, melon and amla.**
    - This will provide them **easy loans for agricultural work** and **compensation for crop loss due to natural calamities.**
  - Under **KCC , loans are provided to farmers at low interest rates as per their needs.** If farmers repay the loan on time, then an interest **discount of up to 3%** is also given.
  - Under **PMFBY , if a farmer's crop** is destroyed due to **famine, excessive rain or other natural disasters , he** is given **compensation in the form of insurance money by the government. This helps farmers avoid financial crises.**

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Kisan Credit Card

- **About:**
  - **Kisan Credit Card Scheme** was started **in 1998.** To provide adequate and timely credit facility to meet the credit requirements of **farmers (agricultural expenses)**, as well as to meet the expenses related to ancillary activities apart from contingency expenses. This loan facility is provided on a need basis through a simple procedure.
  - In 2004 , this scheme was extended to meet the **investment credit requirement of farmers for allied and non-agricultural activities.**
  - In Budget 2018-19, the Government announced expansion of the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) facility to help **fisheries and livestock** farmers meet their working capital needs.
- **Implementing Agencies:**
  - Commercial Banks
  - Regional Rural Banks (RRBs)
  - Small Finance Banks
  - Co-operative Societies

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)

- **About:**
  - PMFBY was **launched in the year 2016** and is being administered by the **Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.**
  - It replaced **the National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS**) and the **Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (MNAIS).**
- **Eligibility:**
  - All farmers including tenant farmers/holding farmers growing notified crops in the notified areas are eligible for coverage.
- **Objective:**
  - To provide a **comprehensive insurance cover in case of crop failure** due to natural calamities, pests and diseases or any other reason so as to help stabilize the income of the farmers.
  - To stabilise the income of farmers to ensure continuity in farming.
  - To encourage farmers to **adopt new and modern agricultural methods.**
  - To **ensure flow of credit** to the agricultural sector.

Solar Cities in UP

Why in News?

In the National Conference held under **the National Clean Air Programme** in Gorakhpur, the Uttar Pradesh government decided to develop **all the 17 municipal corporations** of the state as **solar cities.**

Key Points

- **About the issue:**
  - Under this initiative, the use of **renewable energy** will be promoted, thereby ensuring **energy self-sufficiency** and **environmental protection.**
  - The government will implement schemes such as setting up of **solar power plants** , **solar street lights** and **solar water-heating systems.**
  - This scheme will **reduce energy costs** and promote **green energy.**
  - This initiative will help in achieving **the 'net-zero' target set by Prime Minister Modi by the year 2070.**
  - The following districts in Uttar Pradesh have Municipal Corporations:
    - Kanpur, Lucknow, Ghaziabad, Agra, Varanasi, Prayagraj, Meerut, Bareilly, Aligarh, Moradabad, Saharanpur, Gorakhpur, Firozabad, Mathura, Ayodhya, Jhansi, Shahjahanpur.
- **Solar City**
  - It is a city that meets its **energy needs** mainly from **solar energy. In this , electricity generation, transportation, water supply** and other basic services depend on solar energy.
  - The main objective of this concept is to make maximum use of **renewable energy sources and** reduce **carbon emissions.**

National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)

- **About:**
  - The NCAP aims to systematically **address air pollution by involving all stakeholders and ensuring necessary action.**

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- Under NCAP, **131 cities** have been identified for **implementation of city specific action plans.**

- **Objective:**
  - This is the **first attempt in the country to develop a national framework** for air quality management with the goal of time-bound reduction.
  - It aims to reduce the **concentration of coarse (PM10) and fine particles (PM2.5)** by at least 20% over the next five years (base year for comparison – 2017).
- **Monitoring:**
  - **"PRANA" portal** has also been launched by MoEFCC :
    - To monitor the **implementation of NCAP.**
    - Monitoring **action plans and implementation status of cities**.
    - Sharing best practices adopted by cities for others to emulate.

National Conference on NCAP

Why in News?

National Conference on National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) was organised in Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh.

Key Points

- **About the conference:**
  - This conference was organized with the joint efforts of Gorakhpur Municipal Corporation and WRI India.
  - The Chief Minister emphasized on environmental protection and **minimizing carbon emissions in the conference. He said that the Net Zero target (2070)** can be achieved only by coordinating **technology and public awareness.**
  - In his address, he said that **since 2017, 17 lakh halogen street lights** have been replaced with LED street lights. This has led **to savings of Rs 1000 crore** and reduction in **energy consumption.**
  - The Chief Minister said that the foundation stone of a plant was laid in **Lakhimpur** to make products from **banana fibre , where the manufactured products will decompose** and mix with the soil in **three months.**
  - In this conference , there was also discussion on preparing an effective strategy to make Gorakhpur **free from open burning of waste by the year 2027.**

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World Resources Institute India

- **About:**
  - WRI India (World Resources Institute India) is an **independent research organisation,** registered as India Resources Trust.

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- It is **inspired by and affiliated with the World Resources Institute (WRI)** , which was **founded in Washington, DC in 1982** to address global environmental and development challenges.

- **Objective:**
  - It aims to promote **environmentally healthy and socially just development.**
  - WRI India develops transformative solutions to protect the environment, enhance livelihoods and enhance human well-being through research, analysis and policy recommendations.
  - It is working on sustainable development projects in various states of India.
- **Headquarters:**
  - The headquarter of WRI India is **located in New Delhi.**

Subacute Sclerosing Panencephalitis

Why in News?

Subacute sclerosing panencephalitis (SSPE) remains a serious **health concern** due to low **coverage of measles vaccination** in Uttar Pradesh.

Key Points

- **About SSPE:**
  - It is a **progressive and fatal brain disorder** associated with **measles (rubella) infection.**
  - It can develop **many years after** infection , even if a person has fully recovered from measles.
  - This disease is mainly found in **children and adolescents and** is more commonly seen **in men than women.**
  - Although cases of SSPE have been reported worldwide, it is considered **a rare disease in Western countries.**
- **Reason:**
  - Usually, **the measles virus does not affect the brain.**
  - But **SSPE can develop** because of **an abnormal immune response** or **certain forms of the virus.**
  - In this condition, **inflammation occurs in the brain** , which **can persist for many years.**
  - **The abnormal immune response to the measles virus** can cause serious complications and **death.**
- **Symptoms:**
  - **Early symptoms** of **SSPE** may include declined **school performance** , **forgetfulness, anger issues, distractibility** , **insomnia** , and **hallucinations.**
    - **Sudden jerks in the hands, head or body muscles** may also be experienced.
    - As the disease progresses, **seizures** and **abnormal, uncontrolled muscle movements** may occur.
  - **In the next stage** of the disease , **the muscles start to become stiff.**
    - Swallowing food **may become difficult.** Additionally, in some cases **the patient's vision may also be affected.**
  - In **the final stage , the body temperature may rise** and **blood pressure and pulse may become abnormal.**
- **Treatment:**
  - **There is no specific treatment available for SSPE.** The disease has **a high mortality rate.**
  - **Antiviral medications** and **immune system-strengthening medications** may be given to control symptoms.

Measles

- **About:**
  - The measles virus is a **ribonucleic acid virus** belonging to **the Morbillivirus genus.**
  - Measles is a **highly contagious disease**, and an infected person often transmits the virus to more than 90% of their unprotected close contacts.
  - The virus **first infects the respiratory tract**, then spreads throughout the body. Measles is a human disease and **does not occur in animals.**

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- Measles is **completely preventable through a two-dose vaccine** and has been officially eliminated in many countries with advanced health care systems.

- **Treatment:**
  - There is **no specific antiviral treatment** for the measles virus.
  - Serious complications from food poisoning can be avoided through medical care that ensures good nutrition, adequate fluid intake, and treatment of dehydration.

Model Village Campaign

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has launched an Model Village Campaign to make 1147 villages of **Ayodhya district** model villages.

Key Points

- **About the campaign:**
  - This campaign was **started from Mahanamau village** located in Tarun block of Ayodhya district.
  - The initiative will cover 1,147 villages spread across 772 gram panchayats.
- **Objective:**
  - To facilitate transportation by **connecting villages to main roads.**
  - To ensure **freedom from open defecation.**
  - To make effective arrangements for **waste disposal** and recycling.
- **Benefits of the campaign:**
  - The standard of living will increase.
  - Economic and social mobility will be promoted.
  - Cleanliness and environmental protection will be promoted.
- **About Model Village:**
  - A model village is one where **cleanliness, safe environment** and **active participation of citizens** are ensured.
  - Such villages have facilities like **complete freedom from open defecation , toilets in all houses, availability of safe and clean drinking water, compost pits for cow dung, pits for separate collection of wet and dry garbage** and **availability of connecting roads.**
  - These features are considered necessary to bring a village into the category of **a model village.**

Ayodhya District

- **About:**
  - It is a religious and historical city situated on the banks of river Saryu.
  - Ayodhya holds special significance as it is the birthplace of Lord Rama.
  - It was the capital of the Kosala Kingdom in ancient times.
  - The city of Faizabad, near the city of Ayodhya , was founded in 1730 by Saadat Ali Khan, the first Nawab of Awadh.
  - Its total area is: 2522.0 sq. km.
- **Importance of Ayodhya in Jainism:**
  - According to Jainism, five out of the twenty-four Tirthankaras were born in Ayodhya:
    - The first tirthankara was **Rishabhanatha**
    - **Ajitnath Ji**, the second tirthankara
    - **Abhinandan Nath Ji,** the fourth Tirthankara
    - The fifth Tirthankara was **Sumatinath**
    - **Anantnath Ji,** the Fourteenth Tirthankara
- **Major places of visit:**
  - Ramjanmabhoomi
  - Kanak Bhawan
  - Hanumangarhi
  - Dashrath Mahal

Low-Level Transportable Radar

Why in News?

The **Ministry of Defence** signed a **₹ 2,906 crore** contract with **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL),** based in for the procurement of the **transportable radar 'Ashwini'** for the **Indian Air Force.**

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Key Points

- **About:**
  - **Low-Level Transportable Radar (LLTR) 'Ashwini'** is an **active electronically scanned phased array radar.**
  - It is used to monitor slow-moving targets such as **high-speed fighter aircraft, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) and helicopters.**
  - This radar is based on **state of the art solid state technology.**
  - It has been indigenously designed and developed by **Electronics and Radar Development Establishment (LRDE) and** Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- **Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL):**
  - It is a **Navaratna Public Sector Undertaking (PSU)** operating under the Ministry of Defence, Government of India.
  - It was established in 1954 to meet the defence needs of the nation.
  - The organization is engaged in various fields of **defence electronics** and **professional electronics**, providing modern technical support to the Indian Defence Forces.
  - **Production Units:**
    - BEL has several manufacturing units located in **Bengaluru** (Head Office), **Ghaziabad (Uttar Pradesh)**, **Panchkula (Haryana)**, **Kotdwar (Uttarakhand)**, **Hyderabad** and **Machilipatnam (Andhra Pradesh)**, **Navi Mumbai** and **Pune (Maharashtra)**, and **Chennai (Tamil Nadu)**.

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)

- **Introduction:**
  - DRDO **is the research and development arm** of **the Ministry of Defence** aimed at empowering India in cutting-edge defence technologies.
  - **Efforts towards self-reliance and** successful indigenous development and production of strategic systems and platforms like Agni **and** Prithvi missile series **,** light combat aircraft Tejas **, multi-barrel rocket launcher** Pinaka **,** air defence system Akash **, a wide range of radars and electronic warfare systems etc.**
- **Establishment:**
  - It was established in 1958 by the integration of **the Technical Development Establishments (TDEs) and Directorate of Technical Development & Production (DTDP) of the Indian Army** and **the Defence Science Organisation (DSO).**
  - DRDO is a network of more than 50 laboratories intensively engaged in development of defence technologies covering various disciplines such as aeronautics, armament, electronics, combat vehicles, engineering systems etc.

Loudspeakers At Religious Places

Why in News?

The **Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh** stressed the need for permanent **noise pollution control measures** for loudspeakers at religious places.

Key Points

- **Important Instructions:**
  - The Chief Minister directed the officials to keep the noise level in religious and public events as per the prescribed standards.
  - He also gave instructions to ensure a **permanent solution** regarding the use of **loudspeakers at religious places.**
- **High Court Decision:**
  - Earlier, the **Allahabad High Court** has also given an important decision regarding the use of loudspeakers at religious places.

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- The court clarified that using loudspeakers for prayers is not a **legal right,** because it may cause **inconvenience** to other people. Therefore, using loudspeakers does not fall under the **category of rights**.

- **Noise Pollution:**
  - Any kind of uncomfortable or excessively loud sound is called **noise pollution.**
  - Sound intensity is measured in **decibels (dB)** and a decibel scale is used to determine its levels.
  - Sound intensity up to **20 dB** is considered **equivalent to a whisper.**
  - According to the **World Health Organisation (WHO)** , sound intensity less than **70 dB** is not harmful to living beings, no matter how long it persists.
    - However, if a person is exposed to noise above **85 dB** for **more than 8 hours** continuously, it may pose a health hazard.
  - The main sources of noise pollution include loud **music, transportation, construction work**, etc., which have a negative impact on human life.
    - Its side effects include **high blood pressure, hearing impairment, sleep disorders** and **heart disease.**

Pilibhit Tiger Reserve

Why in News?

The **Pilibhit Tiger Reserve (PTR)** is set to become a new sanctuary for **rhinos** coming from **Nepal**, where efforts are in full swing to establish a permanent habitat for them.

Key Points

- The **Lagga-Bhagga area** of **Pilibhit Tiger Reserve** is adjacent to **the Shukla Phanta Sanctuary** of Nepal, due to which Nepalese rhinoceroses often visit here.
- The area has **rich grasslands**, **adequate water sources** and **uninterrupted wildlife corridors,** making it an ideal environment for a stable population of rhinos.
  - Under **'Project Rhino', rhinoceroses** will be translocated from Assam and Nepal.
- **Importance and Benefits**
  - The project will preserve **the dwindling rhino population as well as strengthen the wildlife ecosystem.**
  - Tourism will be promoted , which will **improve the economic condition** of local communities.
  - Having **protected and demarcated areas** will reduce the problem of rhinos straying into **agricultural lands**, thereby **preventing conflict between farmers and wildlife.**
- **Pilibhit Tiger Reserve:**
  - It is located in Pilibhit and Shahjahanpur districts of Uttar Pradesh. It was notified as **a Tiger Reserve in the year 2014.**
    - In the year 2020, it won **the international award TX2** for doubling the number of tigers in the last four years.
  - It is part of **the Terai Arc landscape in the Upper Gangetic Plain.**
  - The Gomti River originates from this reserve, which is also the catchment area of several other rivers like **Sharda, Chuka and Mala Khannot.**
  - It is home to myriad wild animals, including the endangered **tiger, swamp deer, Bengal florican, hog deer, leopard** , etc.

Project Rhino

- **Project Rhino is an important conservation initiative** in India aimed at saving the dwindling population of **one-horned rhinoceros.**
- It began in **the 1980s**, when the threat of extinction to rhinos was seriously recognised.
- It evolved into a **multi-faceted program , with** key strategies including **habitat conservation**, **community engagement**, **law enforcement**, and **scientific research.**

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Memorial Of Freedom Fighter Chittu Pandey

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government announced plans to build a **memorial in honour of freedom fighter Chittu Pandey** in Ballia district.

Key Points

- **About Chittu Pandey:**
  - He was a **great freedom fighter and revolutionary** who played **an important role** in **the Quit India Movement of 1942.**
  - Due to his bravery and leadership skills he is known as **"Lion of Ballia".**
- **Birth:**
  - Chittu Pandey was born on **10 May 1895** in **Rattuchak village of Ballia district** of Uttar Pradesh.
- **Establishment of independent government:**
  - **On August 19, 1942**, under Chittu Pandey's leadership, the revolutionaries of Ballia ousted British officials, proclaimed Ballia's independence, and **established a temporary national government.**
    - Chittu Pandey assumed **charge as the interim administrator (chief)** of this short-lived administration.
  - This government **succeeded in handing over the power to the Collector and releasing all the arrested Congress leaders.**
    - However, after a few days **the British army again captured Ballia and arrested** Chittu Pandey and other revolutionaries.
- **Demise:**
  - He died on **6 December 1946.**

Quit India Movement

- **About:**
  - **On 8th August 1942**, Mahatma Gandhi called for an **end to British rule and launched the Quit India Movement** at the **All-India Congress Committee session in Mumbai.**
  - Gandhi gave the call of **"Do or Die "** in his speech at the Gwalia Tank Maidan, now known as **August Kranti Maidan.**
  - Popularly known as the **'Grand Old Lady'** of the freedom movement, **Aruna Asaf Ali** is known for hoisting the Indian flag at Mumbai's Gowalia Tank grounds during the Quit India Movement.
  - **The slogan 'Quit India '** was coined by **Yusuf Meherli**, a socialist and trade unionist who also served as the mayor of Mumbai.
- **Reasons for movement:**
  - The immediate cause of the movement was the failure of **the Cripps Mission.**
  - The British concept of unconditional support from India to the British in the Second World War was not accepted by **the Indian National Congress.**
  - **Anti-British sentiments** and demands for complete independence had gained popularity among the Indian masses.
- **Success of the movement:**
  - **Emergence of Future Leaders:**
    - Leaders like **Ram Manohar Lohia**, **JP Narayan**, **Aruna Asaf Ali, Biju Patnaik, Sucheta Kripalani** etc. carried out underground activities who later emerged as prominent leaders.
  - **Participation of women:**
    - Women participated enthusiastically in the movement. Women leaders like **Usha Mehta** helped set up an underground radio station that created awareness about the movement.
  - **Rise of Nationalism:**
    - The Quit India Movement brought forth a unique feeling of unity and brotherhood in the country. Many **students left schools and colleges and people left their jobs.**

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Maharishi Dadhichi Kund

Why in News?

On 10th March 2025, the Uttar Pradesh government announced to make **Maharishi Dadhichi Kund** a **state tourist centre.**

Key Points

- **About Dadhichi Kund:**
  - Dadhichi Kund is located in **Mishrikh area,** about 12 kilometers away from **Naimisharanya.**
    - It is believed that the water from all the pilgrimage places of the world gets mixed in this pond, hence the name of this area is Mishrikh.
    - This place is associated with **Maharishi Dadhichi**, who donated his bones to provide the thunderbolt to the gods to **kill Vritrasura.**
  - Dadhichi Kund is spread over about **2 acres of land.** Near it is a grand temple of Maharishi Dadhichi, in which his statues are installed in various postures. The architecture of the temple and the environment around it make it a **calm and spiritual center.**
- **Maharishi Dadhichi**
  - He was a great ascetic, a knower of the Vedas and scriptures and a philanthropist sage.
  - He is believed to be the son of sage **Atharva** and mother **Shanti.**
  - He spent his entire life in **devotion to Shiva and welfare of the people.**
  - When the Gods needed his **bones and thunderbolts** to kill the demon **Vritraasura , he gave up his body by the power of yoga.**
- **Naimisharanya:**
  - It is an ancient pilgrimage site located in **Sitapur district** of Uttar Pradesh.
  - This place is situated on the banks of river Gomti and is called the place of penance of sages.
  - According to religious beliefs, **88 thousand sages** had performed penance here, due to which it is considered a holy place in Hinduism.

Swavalambini

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) in collaboration with NITI Aayog launched the women entrepreneurship programme **Swavalambini** at **Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut.**

Key Points

- **About Swavalambini:**
  - It is a **women entrepreneurship program** aimed at empowering women by helping them **develop an entrepreneurial mindset**, providing necessary **resources and guidance for business success.**
  - **Program structure:**
    - A **phase-wise entrepreneurship process** is initiated **comprising Entrepreneurship Awareness Programme (EAP), Women Entrepreneurship Development Programme (EDP), Faculty Development Programme (FDP**) and Financing.
    - This will involve **recognising and rewarding successful enterprises,** which will inspire others and establish a clear **framework for promoting women-led enterprises in India.**
    - **Strengthen the culture of entrepreneurship in higher education institutions**, making business creation a viable career path for women.
    - **Promote women-led enterprises** as a key driver of India's economic transformation.

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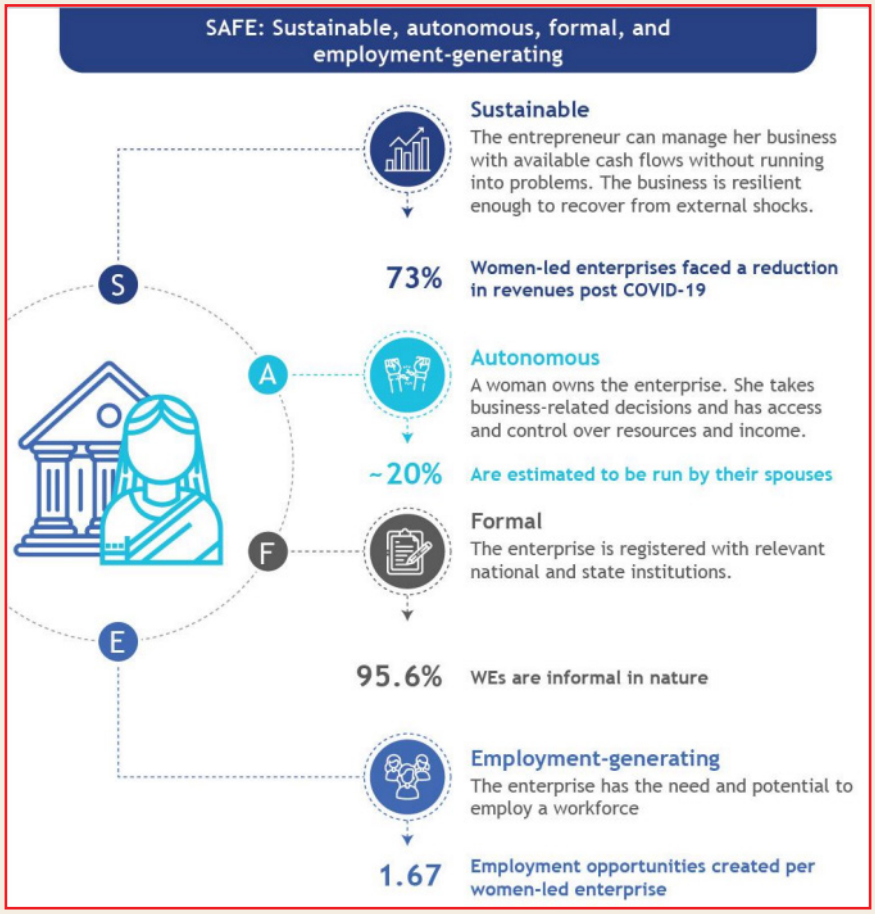
- **Aligned with national policies:**
  - **National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** promotes **skill integration, industry collaboration, and entrepreneurship-driven education.**
  - Swavalambanni works on this by ensuring **financial and consultancy support** for women entrepreneurs.
  - It strengthens initiatives like **,** Stand-up India **,** PM Mudra Yojana and Women Entrepreneurship Platform**.**
  - Swavalambanni is in line with Union Budget 2025 , which launches a **Rs 10,000 crore start-up fund and 100% tax exemption on start-up dividends for the first five years** , providing crucial financial support to emerging women-led enterprises.

Women Entrepreneurship Scenario in India

- **Total MSMEs in India:** Over 63 million, Women-owned MSMEs **20% (12.39 million).**
- **Employment Contribution:** Women-led MSMEs provide employment to 22-27 million people.
- **India Ranking in Women Entrepreneurship: I**ndia is currently ranked 57th out of 65 countries in **the Mastercard Index on Women Entrepreneurship (MIWE) 2021.**
  - **India ranks 70th among 77 nations in the Global Female Entrepreneurship Index (FEI)** as estimated by the Global Entrepreneurship and Development Institute.
- **Top states with highest participation of women-led MSMEs: West Bengal** (23.42%), **Tamil Nadu** (10.37%), **Telangana** (7.85%), **Karnataka** (7.56%), and **Andhra Pradesh** (6.76%).



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Multi-Modal Logistics Park in Varanasi

Why in News?

An Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between National Highways Logistics Management Limited (NHLML) and Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) to develop a state-of-the-art Multi-Modal Logistics Park (MMLP) at Varanasi.

Key Points

- **About MMLP:**
  - **Objective:**
    - It aims to **strengthen the supply chain by seamless freight movement through road, rail and water routes,** reducing costs and increasing business efficiency.
  - **Significance and Impact:**
    - **Spread over 150 acres,** the park will have **direct connectivity to NH7 and Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor (EDFC)** , making freight transportation smooth and affordable.
    - **Connectivity with National Waterway-1 (NW-1) will facilitate cargo transportation through waterways** , thereby **reducing transportation costs.**
    - The construction of this logistics park **will attract significant investments** , which will give a boost to the economy of Uttar Pradesh.
    - **Traders, industries and MSMEs will benefit at local and national level** , leading to increased production and exports.
    - This project **will generate direct and indirect employment opportunities at the local level.**
    - **The logistics sector will be modernized** , which will pave the way for developing such centres in other cities in the future.
    - It will act as a model under **the Gati Shakti scheme** and multi-modal connectivity, promoting such projects in other states as well.

Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)

- IWAI is a **statutory body under the Ministry of Shipping.**
- It **develops and maintains inland water transport infrastructure on national waterways** through grants received from the Ministry of Shipping.
- The Authority has its **head office at Noida (Uttar Pradesh)** with **regional offices** at Patna, Kolkata, Guwahati and Kochi and sub-offices at Prayagraj (formerly Allahabad), Varanasi, Bhagalpur, Rakka and Kollam.

Prime Minister's Gati Shakti scheme

- **Objective:** To **ensure integrated planning and implementation of basic infrastructure projects** over the next four years with a focus on accelerating work on the ground, reducing costs and creating employment.
  - The Gati Shakti plan subsumes the Rs 110 lakh crore ' **National Infrastructure Pipeline ' launched in the year 2019.**
  - Apart from cutting logistics costs, the **scheme aims to increase cargo handling capacity and reduce turnaround time at ports to boost trade.**
    - It also **aims to build 11 industrial corridors and two new defence corridors** (one in Tamil Nadu and the other in Uttar Pradesh). Under this, 4G connectivity will be expanded to all villages.
    - Also, a plan is being made to add 17,000 km of capacity to the gas pipeline network.
- **Integrated Approach:** It entails **bringing together 16 ministries** dealing with infrastructure.
- **Gati Shakti Digital Platform:** It involves **creation of an umbrella platform through which basic infrastructure projects can be created and implemented** effectively through real-time coordination between various ministries/ departments.

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The Rise App

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has implemented **the RISE app (Rapid Immunization Skill Enhancement - RISE)** to ensure **regular vaccination of children.**

Key Points

- **About RISE App:**
  - RISE (Responsive Immunization Support for Everyone) is a **digital training and monitoring platform** developed for **effective implementation of immunization programs.**
  - **The app** provides **real-time updates to** help health workers monitor **vaccination schedules, safety protocols, cold chain management** , and **adverse effects following immunization.**
  - **RISE App** plays a vital role in **strengthening** Mission Indradhanush of the Government of India.
  - This **digital platform** has been developed for staff nurses, auxiliary nurse midwives (**ANM) and health workers to** enable them **to accurately monitor** and **effectively manage routine immunization** of children.
- **Aim:**
  - The initiative aims **to increase vaccination coverage** , **identify hesitant families** and **ensure proper vaccination.**
    - This app will further strengthen **the safety and effectiveness of vaccination** by replacing **traditional training methods** with **a digital learning system.**
- **Training and Implementation Process:**
  - **The process of training** health workers is being carried out in three phases:
    - District level officers have been successfully trained in all **the 75 districts of the state.**
    - **Training of block-level officers is** currently underway to ensure effective implementation of the programme at **the ground level.**
    - After full implementation of the plan, around **52,175 vaccination personnel** will be equipped with **digital devices** , which will increase their efficiency and data management efficiency.

Mission Indradhanush

- **The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare**, Government of India launched 'Mission Indradhanush' on **25 December 2014.**
- Mission Indradhanush is a **booster vaccination programme,** which was launched in 201 districts with low vaccination coverage.
- It **represents 7 vaccines against 7 diseases covered in the Universal Immunization Programme.**
  - These diseases are **Tuberculosis, Poliomyelitis, Hepatitis B, Diphtheria, Pertussis, Tetanus and Measles.**
- Apart from this, after inclusion of vaccines against **Measles Rubella, Rotavirus, Haemophilus Influenzae Type-B and Polio**, the number of these vaccines has increased to 12.
  - In some selected states and districts, vaccines are also given **against Japanese Encephalitis and Pneumococcus.**
  - To accelerate full immunization coverage, India has launched an ambitious plan– Intensified Mission Indradhanush.

Taj Trapezium Zone

Why in News?

On 5th March 2025, **the Supreme Court** directed **the Taj Trapezium Zone (TTZ) Authority** to appoint **the Forest Research Institute (FRI)** to conduct a tree census in the zone.

Key Points

- **Supreme Court Decision:**
  - According to the court, it is **necessary to count the trees existing in the area to prevent any illegal felling.**
  - The court gave fresh directions that the purpose of **the Uttar Pradesh Tree Protection Act, 1976** is to count and protect trees.

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- Without tree census, the provisions of this Act cannot be effectively implemented.
- The court also upheld the need to obtain permission for cutting trees for agroforestry.
- In its 2015 judgment, the court had ruled that the provisions of the 1976 Act for agroforestry would continue to apply, which means that necessary permission would have to be taken before cutting any tree.

About Taj Trapezium Zone:

- **TTZ is a designated area of 10,400 square kilometres around the Taj Maha**l to protect it from pollution.
  - It is so named because it is located **around the Taj Mahal and is shaped like a trapezoid.**
- It contains many monuments, including the three World Heritage Sites,Taj Mahal, Agra Fort and Fatehpur Sikri.
  - This includes **Agra, Firozabad, Mathura, Hathras and Etah districts of Uttar Pradesh** and **Bharatpur district of Rajasthan.**
- The area is divided into four zones based on the category of industries, namely red, green, orange and white.
- Only **environment friendly, non-polluting small, tiny and micro scale industries may be allowed to operate** in this zone.

Forest Research Institute (FRI)

- FRI is located in **Dehradun, Uttarakhand**. This institute **started in the year 1878 as Forest School.**
- In the year 1906, it was reestablished as **the Imperial Forest Research Institute under the British Imperial Forestry Service.** Later it was renamed as Forest Research Institute and College.
- It has many centres across the country, which carry out research as well as provide training to forest officers and forest rangers.
- After the reorganization of forestry research in the country and the creation of **Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) in 1988,** the training and research centers were given the status of independent institutions.
- The Forest Research Institute presently comes under ICFRE which was granted **Deemed University status in December 1991.**

COAIEMA Conference

Why in News?

The 8th International **COAIEMA (Council of Asian Industry and Emerging Market Alliances)** conference was held in Lucknow on 8th March, 2025.

Key Points

About the conference:

- The conference was organised at **Ambalika Institute of Management and Technology, Lucknow.**
- It focused on **strengthening collaboration among industries** and promoting sustainable development.
- Representatives from **various countries, policy makers and industry experts** participated in this conference.
- Its main objective was to **encourage the industries and innovation sector of Asian countries**towardsprogressandempowerment.

Topics of discussion:

- Challenges and Opportunities in Artificial Intelligence: Engineering and Management Applications
- Startup Ecosystem
- Latest technological advancements
- Digital Transformation and Green Energy

About COAIEMA:

- It is a leading regional organisation that **works to strengthen cooperation among industries and emerging markets in Asian countries.**
- Its main objectives are:
  - Promoting innovation.
  - Accelerating the adoption of **green technology.**
  - Taking rapid steps towards digitalisation of industries.
  - Strengthening trade relations among Asian countries.

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Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- AI is defined as the **ability of machines and systems to acquire knowledge, apply it, and behave intelligently.**
- The term "artificial intelligence" was first used by American computer scientist and cognitive scientist **John McCarthy.** He is **considered the father of AI.**
- It includes techniques like **machine learning, deep learning, big data, neural networks, computer vision, large language models, etc.**
- The ideal characteristic of artificial intelligence is the **ability to perform and rationalize actions** that have the best probability of achieving a specific goal.

Women's Taekwondo Championship

Why in News?

Khelo India Women's Taekwondo Championship was held in **Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh** on the occasion of **International Women's Day** on 8th March 2025.

Key Points

- **About the Championship:**
  - **Events** :
    - This championship was organized by **the Union Ministry of Sports and Youth Welfare, Khelo India, Sports Authority of India, Taekwondo Federation of India** and **Uttar Pradesh Taekwondo Association.**

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- In this championship, senior category competitions were organized in various weight categories.

- **Chief Medalist:**
  - Lucknow - 4 gold, 4 silver, 6 bronze
  - Agra - 4 gold, 1 silver
  - Mathura, Farrukhabad – 1-1 gold and other medals

Taekwondo

- **About:**
  - Taekwondo is a **Korean martial art** characterized by punching and kicking techniques.
  - It emphasizes **head-high kicks, spinning jump kicks, and fast kicking techniques.**
  - It not only develops **physical skills but also mental strength.**
- **History:**
  - Taekwondo's roots date back to Korea's Three-Kingdoms era (c. 50 BC).
  - **The Hwarang** , warriors of **the Silla Dynasty,** developed a martial art called Taekkyon ("foot-hand").
  - In the early 20th century, it became the dominant martial art in Korea.
  - In 1973 the **World Taekwondo Federation (WTF)** was founded.

Integrated Solar Manufacturing Unit

Why in News?

On 8th March 2025, the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh laid the foundation stone of Avaada Group's 5 gigawatt (GW) **integrated solar manufacturing unit in Gautam Buddha Nagar (Noida),** and inaugurated a 1.5 GW **solar module manufacturing unit.**

- Avaada Group is a leading Indian **green energy** company, headquartered in Mumbai, engaged in **renewable energy generation through solar, wind, pumped hydro and green fuels.**

Key Points

- According to the Chief Minister, this initiative not only strengthens our state's contribution to **renewable energy but also boosts employment and** supports our vision of **a USD 1 trillion economy.**
- This effort contributes to **Uttar Pradesh's goal of reaching 22,000 MW of solar power generation by the year 2026-2027.**
- The Chief Minister described it as an important step towards realising the vision of achieving **net-zero carbon emissions by 2070.**

Renewable Energy

- **About:**
  - Renewable energy is energy derived from natural, replenishable sources such as **solar, wind, hydropower, biomass, geothermal and tidal.**
  - These sources are sustainable and environmentally friendly, reducing dependence on fossil fuels.
- **Type:**
  - **Solar energy:** obtained from the sun's radiation using **solar panels or solar thermal systems.**
  - **Wind energy :** Produced by converting the kinetic energy of the wind into electricity using wind turbines.
  - **Hydroelectricity:** Produced using the energy of flowing water (rivers, dams, waterfalls).
  - **Biomass energy:** Made from organic materials such as plant residues and animal waste for heating, electricity and biofuels.
  - **Geothermal energy:** Obtained from the Earth's internal heat (hot water, steam) for electricity production and direct heating.
  - **Tidal and wave energy :** uses the motion of sea water (gravitational pull or surface waves) to generate electricity.
    - Coastal areas like the Gulf of Kutch and the Sundarbans offer potential for tidal energy.

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New Schemes on Eminent Figures

Why in News?

The Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh announced the **launch of 10 ambitious new schemes** named after **eminent figures** to immortalize their contributions.

Key Points

- These schemes will drive **progress in agriculture, industry, education, and social welfare while also fostering employment generation, women's empowerment, and intellectual growth.**
- **Important Schemes:**
  - **Mata Shabri Canteens and Rest Houses in Krishi Mandis:**
    - The government will establish **canteens and rest houses in Krishi Mandis under the name of Mata Shabri,** offering farmers and workers affordable food and rest facilities.
    - In a similar initiative, a **Shabri Restaurant has also been set up in Ayodhya to honor her legacy.**
  - **Sardar Patel District Economic Zone:** Boosting Employment and Development
    - The District Economic Zone, named after Sardar Patel, will be developed as an **employment hub to ensure job opportunities for at least one person from every family.**
    - Designed according to the unique strengths and potential of each district, the zone will be established on 100 acres of land under **the Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model.**
    - This initiative honors Sardar Patel, **India's first Home Minister**, and aims to drive economic growth and job creation at the district level.
  - **Mata Ahilyabai Holkar Working Women's Hostels:**
    - The government will establish **working women's hostels in Varanasi, Meerut, Prayagraj, Gorakhpur, Kanpur Nagar, Jhansi, and Agra** to provide **safe and comfortable accommodation for employed women.**
    - These hostels will be named after Mata Ahilyabai Holkar, a trailblazer of cultural renaissance, in **honor of her 300th birth anniversary.**
  - **Maharani Laxmibai Meritorious Girl Student Scooty Scheme:**
    - The government has **launched a scheme to provide scooties to meritorious girl students, honoring Rani Laxmibai,** the valiant heroine of India's freedom struggle.
  - **Sant Kabirdas CM Mitra Park Scheme:**
    - The government will establish **10 textile parks across the state in honor of Sant Kabirdas**, who championed the values of humanity and labor.
    - Additionally, **the PM Mitra Park,** currently under construction in the **Lucknow-Hardoi region**, is also dedicated to Sant Kabir.
  - **Sant Ravidas Leather Industry Park:**
    - The government will develop **two leather industry parks in the state**, honoring Sant Ravidas, who advocated for equality and the dignity of labor.
    - One of these parks will be **established in Agra, serving as a major hub** for the **leather industry.**
    - This initiative will revitalize the leather sector while creating employment **opportunities for thousands of artisans and workers.**
  - **Bharat Ratna Chaudhary Charan Singh Seed Park in Lucknow:**
    - The government will establish **a Seed Park in Lucknow**, dedicated to former Prime Minister **Bharat Ratna Chaudhary Charan Singh.**
    - This initiative aims to provide **farmers with high-quality seeds and essential agricultural resources, enhancing productivity** and sustainability in the agricultural sector.

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- **Atal Bihari Vajpayee Urban Libraries:**
  - In honor of the birth centenary of Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the government has allocated a **budget to establish libraries in urban areas** across the state.
  - This initiative aims to **promote education, knowledge, and intellectual development** while commemorating the legacy of the former Prime Minister.
- **Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar Hostel Scheme:**
  - The government has dedicated the **reconstruction and development of social welfare hostels to** Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar.
  - This initiative aims to **support students from Dalit, backward, and economically weaker sections**, ensuring better access to education and accommodation.
- **Birsa Munda Tribal Museums in Mirzapur and Sonbhadra:**
  - In commemoration of Birsa Munda**'s 150th birth anniversary,** celebrated as **Tribal Pride Year,** the government will establish two tribal museums in Mirzapur and Sonbhadra.
  - The budget has allocated the necessary funds for this initiative, aiming to **preserve and showcase tribal heritage and culture.**

MYUVA Scheme

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government distributed **loans worth Rs 100 crore to 2500 beneficiaries** of Gorakhpur and Basti divisions under Mukhyamantri Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan.

- Besides this, toolkits were also provided to 2100 trainees under the ODOP (One District One Product) scheme.

Key Points

- **About MYUVA Scheme:**
  - Under this scheme, **the state government aims to create one lakh young entrepreneurs** every year by providing interest-free loans for **projects up to Rs 5 lakh.**
    - The government has allocated **Rs 1,000 crore in the budget for the financial year 2024-25** to support this initiative.
  - It is designed to empower educated and skilled youth across the state, facilitate self-employment opportunities and promote the setting up of new MSMEs (Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises).
  - Beneficiaries who have received training under various government-run schemes such as Vishwakarma Shram Samman Yojana , One District One Product Training and Toolkit Scheme , **SC, ST, OBC Training Scheme and skill upgradation run by Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission** will be eligible for assistance.
    - Additionally, youth having certificates, diplomas and degrees from educational institutions will also be entitled to benefits under the scheme.
  - On successful repayment of the first loan, the units will be eligible for the second stage of funding, where a composite loan up to double the initial amount or Rs 7.50 lakh can be provided.

One District One Product Programme(ODOP)

- **Introduction:**
  - ODOP is an **initiative to promote economic development at the district level** by promoting and branding one product from each district of the country.
  - It was **launched on 24 January 2018**, on the first foundation day of Uttar Pradesh.
- **Objective:**
  - Preserve and develop local arts/skills and promote creativity.
  - Increase in income and local employment (resulting in reduced migration for employment).
  - Improvement in product quality and skill development.
  - Transforming products in artistic ways (through packaging, branding).

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- Linking production with tourism (live demos and sales outlets – gifts and souvenirs).
- To resolve the issues of economic differences and regional imbalances.

India's First Lithium Grade Refinery

Why in News?

Lohum Company launched India's first **lithium grade refinery in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.**

Key Points

- **Production capacity and efficiency:**
  - This refinery will produce **1,000 metric tonnes of battery-grade lithium annually. Its capacity will increase to 20 thousand tonnes in the year 2029.**
  - The **black mass** generated from **e-waste** will be recycled and lithium will be emitted from it.
  - Additionally, the company is expanding its capabilities in the production of **Cathode Active Material (CAM) , an essential component for large-scale lithium-ion battery production.**
  - The company is currently refining more than 90% of lithium in India.
  - According to the company, its **technical efficiency** is competitive with that of China and more economical than US/European facilities.
- **Lithium refining:**
  - Lithium-ion batteries are widely used in **electric vehicles (EVs), smartphones, laptops, and other electronic devices.**
  - The demand for electric vehicles and battery storage is going to increase rapidly in India in the coming years, which **will also increase the need for lithium.**
  - A large portion of India's lithium supply **comes from China** , which poses a strategic and economic challenge for India.
  - This expansion of Lohum will play an important role in freeing India from this dependence.

Lithium

- **Introduction:**
- **About:**
  - It is a chemical element whose **symbol is (Li)**.
  - It is a **soft and silver-white metal.**
  - It is the lightest metal and the lightest solid element under standard conditions.
  - It is highly **reactive and flammable** , so must be stored as mineral oil.
  - It is **alkaline and a rare metal.**
  - Alkali metals include the chemical elements **lithium, sodium, potassium, rubidium, cesium and francium**. Together with hydrogen, they form group-1 which is located in the s-block of the Periodic Table.
  - **Rare Metals (RM)** include Niobium (Nb), Tantalum (Ta), Lithium (Li), Beryllium (Be), Cesium (Cs) etc. and Rare Earths (RE) include Scandium (Sc) and Yttrium (Y) besides Lanthanum (La) to Lutetium (Lu).
  - Due to their strategic importance, these metals are **used in nuclear and other high-tech industries** like electronics, telecommunication, information technology, space, defence etc.

UNESCO Recognition for Cities

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government will apply for **UNESCO recognition for five cities as intangible heritage and creative cities** to preserve the state's cultural heritage and gain global recognition.

Key Points

- **Selected Cultural Cities (Elements):**
  - Perfume of kannauj
  - Holi of Braj
  - Ganga Aarti in Varanasi
  - Glass Art of Firozabad
  - Black Pottery of Azamgarh (Nizamabad)

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- **Further Attempt:**
  - The State government is also making efforts to include **the folk art and folk literature of Bundelkhand in the intangible cultural heritage** of humanity.
  - Research will be conducted on **the Deg-Bhapka method , historical importance, socio-economic impact and traditional processes** for **Kannauj perfume.**
  - **The historical, spiritual and ritualistic significance of the Ganga Aarti of Varanasi** will be studied.
  - **Holi of Braj,** especially **Lathmar Holi** will be given prominence.
  - Documents will be prepared by conducting research on **Alha singing and Rai dance of Bundelkhand , black pottery** of Azamgarh and **glass industry of Firozabad.**
- **Historical context and UNESCO recognition:**
  - In the year **2017,** due to the efforts of the central and state governments, **Kumbh was for the first time** recognized by UNESCO as an intangible cultural heritage of humanity.
  - Effects and potential benefits:
    - **By getting global recognition** , these cultural heritages will get promotion at international level.
    - **Tourism will be boosted** , which will benefit the local economy.
    - **Local artisans, artists and traditional industries will get protection** , which will strengthen their livelihood.
    - **Preservation of culture and heritage** will be promoted, so that these traditions remain safe for generations to come.

UNESCO

- The **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)** is a specialized agency of **the United Nations (UN)**. This organization strives to establish peace through international cooperation in the field of education, science and culture.
- UNESCO's programmes contribute to the achievement of **the Sustainable Development Goals** defined in Agenda 2030 , adopted by **the United Nations General Assembly in 2015.**
- It has **193 member countries and 11 associate members.** India joined UNESCO in 1946.
- The United States and Israel formally left UNESCO in 2019.
- Its **headquarters is in Paris (France)**.

Taj Festival

Why in News?

The Taj Mahotsav was organised at Shilp Gram, **Agra** from 18th February to 2nd March 2025.

Key Points

- **About:**
  - The Taj Mahotsav saw a unique confluence of **Indian art, crafts, music, dance, and cuisine.** During the festival, various cultural programs, craft exhibitions, and food fairs were organized.
  - This was the **33rd edition** of the Taj Mahotsav organised by the **Taj Mahotsav Committee.**
  - The **theme** of the festival was ' **Dharohar** ', depicting the rich cultural heritage of India.
- **Major events:**
  - Flower show at Atal Garden
  - Garment Show
  - our heritage our identity
  - Bird watching at **Sur Sarovar Bird Sanctuary**

Taj Festival

- **About:**
  - It is **a vibrant 10-day festival** held annually at **the Shilpgram in Agra.** The festival is inspired by **the rich Mughal and Nawabi culture** that developed in Uttar Pradesh during the 18th and 19th centuries.
- **Objective:**
  - The Taj Mahotsav was started in **1992** to promote local artisans and traditions of Agra.

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Agra District

- **About:**
  - It is situated on the banks of Yamuna River in the western region of Uttar Pradesh state.
  - The latitude of this district is 27.11' N and longitude is 78.0' to 78.2' E.
  - It forms the interstate border with Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh.
  - Modern Agra was founded by **Sikandar Lodi** in **1504 AD.**
  - In 1504 AD, he **shifted his capital from Delhi to Agra.**
- **Major places of interest:**
  - The Taj Mahal
  - Agra Fort
  - fatehpur sikri
  - Tomb of Itmad-ud-Daulah
  - Akbar's Tomb
  - lofty gate
  - Moti Masjid
  - Keetham Lake (Suri Sarovar Bird Sanctuary)

Fluoride Poisoning in Sonbhadra

Why in News?

High levels of fluoride pollution have been found in **Sonbhadra district** of Uttar Pradesh.

Key Points

- **About:**
  - More than two lakh people of 276 villages of Sonbhadra district are affected by drinking **fluoride-contaminated water**.
    - The **fluoride level** in groundwater of villages in **Kon, Bhabni, Myorpur** and **Duddhi blocks** has been found to be **5-6 times more** than the prescribed standard.
- **Adverse effects on health:**
  - Due to fluoride contamination, people's **bones are becoming weak and crooked,** children are being born **disabled** and a large number of elderly people are becoming **unable to walk.**
- **Order of NGT:**
  - Despite the order of the National Green Tribunal (NGT), people are forced to drink fluoride-contaminated water.
  - It was not implemented effectively by **the local administration** and **concerned departments.**

Fluoride

- **About**
  - Fluoride is a widely occurring, non-biodegradable and long-term pollutant. It is produced by **burning coal bricks.** Fluoride is **naturally** found in minerals as well as **in soil, water and air.**
- **Toxicity:**
  - It is highly **toxic**. The World Health Organization recommends an upper limit of fluoride in drinking water of **1.5 mg/liter.**
- **Effects of Fluoride:**
- When consumed in adequate amounts, **fluoride prevents tooth decay,** aids in the formation of tooth enamel, and prevents the loss of bone mineralization but in high amounts it has a **negative effect on bones and joints, and also causes fluorosis in teeth.**
- Fluoride pollution also has negative effects on wildlife.

Fecal Coliform Bacteria

Why in News?

According to a report by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the level of **faecal coliform bacteria** in the **Ganga and Yamuna at Prayagraj Sangam** is far higher than the safe limit of **2,500 units per 100 ml of water.**

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Key Points

- The water of the **Yamuna and Ganga** at **Prayagraj Sangam** is entirely unfit for **drinking and bathing**, posing serious health risks.
- The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** is hearing the issue and a report is being sought from the concerned authorities.
- NGT has already given instructions to the Uttar Pradesh government regarding the **sewage management plan** during the **Maha Kumbh Mela.**
- **Fecal Coliform Bacteria:**
  - **About**
    - It is a collection of **microorganisms** which are mainly found in the feces or waste excreted by warm-blooded animals **and humans.**
    - These are usually considered as indicators of **potential pollution** in the water. Other coliform bacteria include **Escherichia, Klebsiella,** and **E. coli.**
  - **Effects on health**
    - This bacteria can cause many diseases such as **gastrointestinal infections** , **skin and eye infections** , **typhoid** , **hepatitis A** and **respiratory problems.**

Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB):

- The **CPCB** was constituted as a **statutory organisation** in September 1974 under the **Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.**
- Thereafter, the **Central Pollution Control Board** was entrusted with powers and functions under the **Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.**
- The Board also provides technical services to the **Ministry of Environment and Forests** under the provisions of the **Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.**

Places Of Worship Act, 1991

Why in News?

Recently, Member of Parliament Iqra Chaudhary has approached the **Supreme Court** for effective implementation of the **Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991**.

Key Points

- This Act freezes/maintains the status of any place of worship in the same condition as it was on **August 15, 1947**.
- **Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991:**
  - It seeks to maintain the **"religious nature"** of places of worship as it was in **1947.**
- **Objective** :
  - The purpose of this Act is to protect the religious status of places of worship and to prevent conversion between different **religious denominations** or within the same denomination.
  - **Section 3** of the Act prohibits conversion of a place of worship or even a portion thereof into a place of worship of a different religious denomination or a different class of people within the same religious denomination.
  - **Section 4(2)** of the Act states that all suits, appeals or other proceedings relating to the change of nature of a place of worship (which were pending on August 15, 1947) shall abate after the commencement of this Act and no fresh action can be taken in such cases.
  - The Act also imposes a positive obligation on the Government to maintain the religious character/nature of every place of worship as it was at the time of independence.
- **Exception:**
  - The disputed site of Ayodhya (Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid) was exempted from this Act.
  - Apart from this, some other cases were also exempted in this Act such as:
    - Any place of worship which is an ancient and historical monument or an archaeological site covered under the **'Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958'.**
    - Cases which have been settled or on which a final verdict has been given.
- **Penalty:**
  - Under **Section 6 of the Act**, any person contravening the provisions of the Act is liable to imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years and also to fine.

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- **Opinion of the Supreme Court** :
  - In its 2019 Ayodhya case verdict, the Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court referred to this law, saying that it manifests the secular values of the Constitution and strictly prohibits its retrogression.

Solar Dehydration Technology

Why in News?

Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur has developed a new Solar Dehydration Technology, with the aim of **increasing the income of farmers** and reducing crop wastage.

Key Points

- **Objective** :
  - This technology facilitates drying of **fruits and vegetables through solar energy. It is an efficient and sustainable method.**
  - Its objective is **to increase the income of farmers and reduce crop wastage.**
  - Farmers can preserve their crops for a long time using this technology and sell them when they get a fair price.
- **Benefits** :
- Solar dehydration **is an eco-friendly method** that saves energy and has a positive impact on the environment.
- Using solar energy **reduces the need for conventional energy sources**, thereby conserving natural resources.
- **TRAINING PROGRAMS** :
  - Under this initiative, 30 farmers have recently been trained in solar dehydration technology.
  - They were given a **live demonstration of pre-treatment and solar drying of tomatoes**, so that they can apply this technology in their farming.
- **Collaboration**:
  - National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has played a crucial role in this project.
  - Additionally, in partnership with **the Food Processing Department of CSJM University,** it has developed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and quality protocols for this technology.

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)

- NABARD is an **apex bank for agriculture and rural development**.
- It was **established on July 12, 1982** by an Act of Parliament based on the recommendations of **the Sivaraman Committee.**
- Its function is to provide credit flow for the **promotion and development of agriculture, small industries, cottage and rural industries, handicrafts and other rural crafts.**
- Along with this, the **sustainable development of villages** is to be done by providing support to other related economic activities in rural areas.

Ganga Water Purity

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government issued a press release to clear the doubts about **the purity of Ganga water in the Maha Kumbh 2025.**

Key Points

- **About the issue** :
  - **Claim of purity of Ganga water** :
    - The press release was issued in reference to the data of **the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) , in which** doubts were raised over the quality of Ganga water in **the Maha Kumbh.**
  - **CPCB Report:**
    - The CPCB report had said that at the beginning of the Maha Kumbh, the Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) **of water at Sangam** was 3.94 milligrams per litre.
    - On 14th January, it was 2.28 mg per liter and on 15th January, it decreased to 1 mg per liter.

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- However, on 24th January, the BOD increased to 4.08 mg per litre and on 29th January, it was recorded at 3.26 mg per litre.

- **Research by Dr. Ajay Kumar Sonkar** :
  - Padmashree **Dr. Ajay Kumar Sonkar** dismissed doubts with scientific evidence to prove the purity of Ganga water.
  - He collected water samples from various major bathing ghats of the Maha Kumbh and examined them microscopically.
  - They found that **despite millions of devotees taking bath in Ganga water, there was no growth of bacteria in it.**
  - No drop was observed in the pH level of water either.

- **Presence of natural viruses** :
  - Ganga water contains 1,100 types of natural viruses, called **bacteriophages,** that eliminate harmful bacteria.

Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)

- The CPCB was constituted as a **statutory organisation in September 1974** under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.
- Thereafter, the Central Pollution Control Board was entrusted with powers and functions under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.
- The Board also provides technical services to the Ministry of Environment and Forests under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- The main functions of the Central Pollution Control Board are described under **the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974 and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.**

Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD)

- The **amount of oxygen required for the biochemical decomposition of organic matter** in water is called BOD.
- The amount of water pollution is measured through BOD. But **only biodegradable matter can be detected through BOD** and it is a very long process. Hence BOD is not used in measuring pollution.
- It is noteworthy that high levels of BOD means that more oxygen is required to decompose large amounts of organic matter present in water.

Nation's First Biopolymer Plant

Why in News?

On 22 February 2025, **the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh** laid the foundation stone of the **nation's** first biopolymer plant at Kumbhi in Lakhimpur Kheri district.

Key Points

- **About the plant:**
  - This **biopolymer plant** will be set up by **Balrampur Sugar Mills Limited at a cost of Rs 2,850 crore.**
  - It will produce polymers in a biological way which will promote an **environmentally friendly industrial revolution.**
- **Objective:**
  - Its main objective is to **promote environmental protection** by using biopolymers instead of plastic.
  - This plant will realize the resolve of **self-reliant India** and **environmental protection.**
- **Benefit:**
  - The bottles, plates, cups, bags etc. produced by the plant will be completely 'disposable' and will be destroyed in just three months after use.
  - Using biopolymers instead of plastic will reduce pressure on the environment.
  - This plant will promote biopolymer production in the country under Make in India.
  - **This will give impetus to trade and investment** in the state.

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Make in India Initiative

- **Introduction:**
  - **Launched in 2014,** Make in India aims to **transform the country into a leading global manufacturing and investment destination.**
  - It is led by **the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce and Industry**, Government of India.
  - This initiative is an open invitation to potential investors and partners from across the world to participate in the growth story of 'New India'.
  - Make in India **has achieved significant success in 27 sectors,** including strategic areas of manufacturing and services.
- **Objective:**
  - **Attracting foreign investment** for new industrialisation and developing the existing industrial base in India to overtake China.
    - To increase the growth rate of the manufacturing sector **to 12-14% per annum.**
    - To create **100 million additional manufacturing jobs by 2022** (revised date 2025).
    - To increase **the contribution of the manufacturing sector to Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to 25% by the year 2025.**

Ganga Expressway Will Be connected to Jewar Airport

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government announced plans to connect **the Noida International Airport (NIA)** , also known as **Jewar Airport , under construction in Noida, with the Ganga Expressway**.

Key Points

- **About the issue:**
  - To connect Ganga Expressway to Jewar Airport, a new 76 km long link expressway will be built via **Bulandshahr.**
  - The government has made a **provision of Rs 1000 crore for this project in the budget.**
  - This link expressway will be connected **24 kilometres earlier through Yamuna Expressway.**
  - The estimated cost of this entire project is Rs 4415 crore.
- **Benefit:**
  - With the construction of this expressway, people of Meerut, Bulandshahr will be able to reach Jewar Airport directly in less time.
  - This will **accelerate business and industrial development.**
  - Better connectivity will also boost the **tourism sector**, thereby improving the local economy.

Jewar International Airport

- This airport will be **the fourth largest international airport in the world** and **the fifth international airport in Uttar Pradesh.** It will be the second international airport in Delhi NCR after Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGI).
- Noida Airport is being developed by **Zurich Airport International AG.**
- **State of the art MRO (Maintenance, Repair & Overhauling) services will also be available** at this airport. The airport has been designed in such a way that operating costs can be kept low and the passenger transfer process can be done quickly.

Ganga Expressway

- **Ganga Expressway** is **the second longest expressway** in the country after Mumbai-Nagpur Expressway.
- It is an ambitious initiative with an estimated length of 594 kilometres.
- Connecting the state from east to west, **this expressway** will pass through 518 villages in 12 districts, **significantly reducing the travel time between Meerut and Prayagraj.**
- The Ganga Expressway is not just a transport link but a testimony to Uttar Pradesh's expansion to modernise its adventure landscape.

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Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary

Why in News?

Recently, the **carcass of a male elephant** aged around 45-50 years was found in the dense forests of **Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary near the India-Nepal border in Bahraich district of Uttar Pradesh.**

Key Points

- **Cause of death:**
  - According to the officials the elephant may have **died due to a fight between two adult elephants**, as footprints and broken trees were found at the spot.
- **Recent wildlife deaths:**
  - Before this incident, a 12-year-old **male tiger** and a 7-year-old **male leopard** had died in the sanctuary.
  - These incidents are causing serious concerns about **the safety of wildlife.**

Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary

- **Location:**
  - **It is located in the Upper Ganga Plain** in the Bahraich district of Uttar Pradesh , which naturally sustains a rich and diverse **ecosystem.**
  - It is spread over an area of 400.6 square km.
- **Protection** :
  - In 1987, it was brought under the ambit of **'Project Tiger' and** together with **Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary** and **Dudhwa National Park, it** forms **the Dudhwa Tiger Reserve. It was established in 1975.**
  - **Species like Chital, deer, wild boar, tiger, elephant and leopard** are also found in the sanctuary.
  - It is home to many endangered species including **the gharial, tiger, rhinoceros, Gangetic dolphin, swamp deer, hispid hare, Bengal florican, white-backed and long-billed vultures.**
- **Ecological structure** :
  - The area is covered with **mixed deciduous forests** , comprising sal and teak forests, lush grasslands, numerous swamps and wetlands.
  - **The Girwa River flows** through this area , which balances the ecosystem.

Brahmos Missile

Why in News?

The manufacturing of **BrahMos missiles** will begin in **Lucknow** in May-June 2025, marking a significant advancement for **the Indian defense sector.**

Key Points

- **About the Manufacturing:**
  - According to the Defense Minister **Brahmos missiles along with defense equipment** will be manufactured in Lucknow.
  - A **railway track will also be built to transport the missile** to the manufacturing unit.
    - In this project, Russian scientists will also work with India.
  - It is a part of the **Uttar Pradesh Defence Industrial Corridor.**
    - The defence manufacturing centres are being established through the Defence Corridor in two states of India, Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

Brahmos Missile

- **The BrahMos missile** , which has a range of 290 km, is an **Indo-Russian joint venture** and is the **world's fastest cruise missile** with a top speed of Mach 2.8 (about three times the speed of sound).
  - BrahMos is named after **the Brahmaputra (India) and Moskva (Russia) rivers.**
- It is a two-stage missile (solid propellant engine in the first stage and liquid ramjet in the second stage).
- It is a **multiplatform missile** i.e. it can be launched from land, air and sea and is a multi-capability missile with high accuracy which operates both during day and night irrespective of weather conditions.

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- It **operates on the "fire and forgets" principle** i.e. it does not require guidance after launch.
- Vietnam, **the United Arab Emirates and Indonesia** are among other potential customers for the BrahMos missile.

Uttar Pradesh Budget 2025-26

Why in News?

On 20 February 2025, the Uttar Pradesh government presented a budget of **Rs 8 lakh 8 thousand 736 crore** for the **financial year 2025-26** in the Legislative Assembly.

Key Points

- **About the budget**
  - This budget is **9.8 percent** more than the budget of the **financial year 2024-25.** The government has taken special care of farmers, youth, women and children in the budget.
  - Total Budget amounted **Rs 8,08,736 crore**, which is **9.8% higher** than the budget for **FY 2024-25.**
  - New schemes worth **Rs 28 thousand 478 crore 34 lakh (Rs 28,478.34 crore)** have been included in the budget.
  - Per capita income in Uttar Pradesh is more than **Rs 93 thousand.**
  - According to a report of the **Reserve Bank of India,** Uttar Pradesh has the highest share in tax collection among all the states in the country.
  - In the year 2023-2024, India's **GDP growth rate** was **9.6 percent** while Uttar Pradesh's growth rate was **11.6 percent.**
  - **According to the state's finance minister,** the budget is an attempt to meet the needs of every section of society - poor, middle class, farmers, women, youth and common people. This is truly a budget for public welfare.
  - The Chief Minister has described the budget as in line with the concept of Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah of Sanatan Dharma
- **GDP of the state**
  - The GDP of the state was **Rs 12.89 lakh crore** in the year **2017-18**, which is estimated to increase to **Rs 27.51 lakh crore** in the year **2024-25.**
  - The **fiscal deficit** of the state is **2.97 percent** of the **gross state domestic product,** which is lower than the limit of **3.5 percent** set in the **Reserve Bank of India FRBM Act.**
- **Summary of Receipts and Expenditures**

Description	Amount (in Rs.)
Total Receipts	Rs 7,79,242.65 crore
Revenue Receipts	Rs 6,62,690.93 crore
Capital receipts	Rs 1,16,551.72 crore
Tax revenue	Rs 5,50,172.21 crore
- Own tax revenue	Rs 2,95,000 crore
- State's share in central taxes	Rs 2,55,172.21 crore
Total Expenses	Rs 8,08,736.06 crore
expenditure on revenue account	Rs 5,83,174.57 crore
capital account expenditure	Rs 2,25,561.49 crore

Area wise details

- **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME):**
  - **Chief Minister Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan** was launched in 2024-25, which aims to establish new micro industries by connecting educated youth with self-employment.
  - A provision of **Rs 1000 crore** is proposed for this scheme in the financial year 2025-26.

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- A provision of **Rs 225 crore** is proposed for the Chief Minister's Youth Self-Employment Scheme.

Handloom and Textile Industry:

- Handloom industry is a decentralised **cottage industry** which provides maximum employment in the state.
- There are about **1.91 lakh** handloom weavers and about 80 thousand households in the state.
- There are 2.58 lakh powerlooms operating in the state through which about 5.50 lakh powerloom weavers are earning their livelihood.
- Provision of Rs 300 crore for establishment of textile park under PM Mitra Yojana.
- Provision of Rs 150 crore for the implementation of Uttar Pradesh Textile Garmenting Policy, 2022.
- A provision of Rs 400 crore proposed for Atal Bihari Vajpayee Powerloom Electricity Flat Rate Scheme.
- Rs 150 crore for PM Mitra Textile Scheme.
- Rs 150 crore for textile garmenting scheme.
- Rs 400 crore for Atal Bihari Vajpayee Powerloom Scheme.
- Budget of Rs 461 crore for Defence Industrial Corridor.

Infrastructure and Development:

- 22% amount allocated for infrastructure development.
- ₹3953 crore for hydropower project.
- Rs 900 crore for expressway (to connect Agra Expressway to Ganga Expressway).
- Extension of Ganga Expressway till Haridwar.
- Rs 100 crore for construction of Mathura-Vrindavan Bankebihari temple corridor.
- Under the Mukhyamantri Gram Jodo Yojana, a provision of Rs. 100 crore for the purchase of medium class electric buses and Rs. 50 crore for the establishment of charging stations is proposed.
- A provision of Rs 4500 crore is proposed for Jal Jeevan Mission

Education and Higher Education:

- 13% amount allocated for education.
- Rs 25 crore for 22 **new primary schools.**
- Rs 300 crore for PM Shri Yojana.
- Rs 454 crore for digital libraries (in villages).
- ₹10 crore for Polytechnic Smart Class Rooms.
- Girls will get benefit in higher education, under the Scooty scheme, meritorious girls will be given scooties.
- Guru Gorakshanath Ayush University (to be completed in 2025).
- Announcement of Government Medical College in Ballia and Balrampur.

Agriculture and Rural Development:

- 11% amount allocated for agriculture and allied services.
- Rs 125 crore for new stadiums in villages.
- Rs 195 crore for Matsya Sampada Yojana.
- Rs 425 crore for Swachh Bharat Mission.

Women and Child Development:

- 400 crore rupees for Rani Laxmibai Scooty Scheme.
- Scooty will be provided on the basis of eligibility.
- A provision of Rs 2980 crore is proposed for payment of pension due to the eligible beneficiaries of destitute women pension scheme.
- A budget provision of Rs 700 crore is proposed under the Chief Minister Kanya Sumangala Scheme.
- A provision of Rs 252 crore proposed for the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Bal Seva Yojana operated during Covid.
- A provision of about Rs 4119 crore is proposed for value integrated child development for the nutrition programme.
- Provision of Rs 971 crore proposed.
- Proposal to make provision of Rs 100 crore for Chief Minister Saksham Suposhan Yojana.

Social Development and Public Welfare:

- Rs 4848 crore for PM Housing Scheme.
- Plan to distribute tablets to students in 2025.

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- Provision of Rs 8105 crore proposed for Old Age/Farmer Pension Scheme (pension of Rs 1000 per month).
- A provision of Rs 550 crore is proposed for the Chief Minister's Mass Marriage Scheme to provide grants for the marriage of daughters of all categories.
- An amount of Rs 60 crore is proposed to provide assistance to voluntary organizations for running residential homes for the elderly and disabled persons.
- Provision of about Rs. 6 crore for Pre-10th and Post-10th Scholarship Scheme for ST students.
- Under the Prime Minister Janjati Adivasi Nyay Maha Abhiyan "PM-Janman", the overall development of the especially vulnerable tribal groups is to be undertaken.
- A budget provision of Rs 1998 crore proposed in the financial year 2025-2026 for the development and upliftment of the minority community
- Provision of Rs. 1050 crore proposed under Chief Minister Contingency Welfare Scheme for financial assistance to farmers in case of accidental death/misconduct.

Health:

- 6% amount allocated for medical and health sector.
- Uttar Pradesh ranks first in the whole country in making Ayushman cards.
- Establishment of Government Medical College and establishment of Government Homeopathy Medical College at Varanasi.
- Announcement to build government medical colleges in Ballia and Balrampur.

Cyber Security and Technological Development:

- Rs 3 crore for cyber security.
- Announcement of establishment of 'Artificial Intelligence City'.
- Plans to establish a 'Technology Research Translation Park'.
- Budget of Rs 5 crore to build AI city in Lucknow.
- ICT Lab and Smart City Plan
- Plan to establish Centre of Excellence

Municipal bodies and development of cities:

- Budget of Rs 2.5 crore for each municipal body.
- 58 municipal bodies will be developed.
- Like NCR, State Capital Region (SCR) will be formed which will include 6 districts – Lucknow, Hardoi, Sitapur, Unnao, Rae Bareli and Barabanki.

Tourism and Cultural Development:

- Rs 100 crore for Mathura-Vrindavan corridor.
- Rs 150 crore for tourism development in Ayodhya.
- Rs 125 crore for tourism development in Chitrakoot and Mathura.
- Rs 30 crore for the renovation of public utility temples.

Forest and Environment

- At present, tree cover in the state has reached 9.96 percent of the geographical area of the state.
- Uttar Pradesh ranks second in the whole country in terms of increase in forest cover and tree cover.
- The number of tigers in the state has increased from 173 in the year 2018 to 205 in the year 2022.
- The country's first vulture tribal centre was established in Gorakhpur.
- Uttar Pradesh Forestry and Industrial University will be established in Gorakhpur.

Exhibition on Dyes, Chemicals and Handicrafts

Why in News?

Recently, an **exhibition** on **handicrafts, dyes and chemicals and garment technology** was organised at **India Expo Centre and Mart in Greater Noida.**

Key Points

About the event:

- The exhibition was organized under **Bharat Tex 2025** , while the mega event was held at **Bharat Mandapam , New Delhi from 14th to 17th February 2025.**

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- This exhibition will **promote overall growth and competitiveness of the industries** through new business opportunities, performance excellence, sustainability and innovation.

- **The events were centered on four major themes:**
  - **Garment Technology Expo (GTE) 2025** - Showcasing cutting-edge machinery, processes and solutions.
  - **Dyechem World Bharat Tex 2025** - Exhibition focused on nature friendly dyes, chemicals and raw materials.
  - **Handmade Products Exhibition** - Exhibition of handmade textiles.
  - **India Sourcing Conclave (ISC)** - Conference organised by Sourcing Consultants Association.

17th Foundation Day Of NSSTA

Why in News?

National Statistical System Training Academy (NSSTA) celebrated its **17th Foundation Day** on 13th February 2025.

Key Points

- **Venue:**
  - The day was celebrated at **Mahalanobis Auditorium, NSSTA, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.**
- **Theme:**
  - Its theme was **"Empowering Governance through Statistical Excellence – 17 Years of Capacity Building and Collaboration".**
- **Objective:**
  - Equip statisticians and field officers with **advanced methodologies,** ensure **high-quality data collection**, and support **evidence-based policy making.**

National Statistical System Training Academy (NSSTA)

- **Introduction:**
  - Located in **Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh,** this institute is an important training institute **under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.**
  - It was **established in January 2009.**
- **Objective:**
  - Its main objective is to **strengthen the statistical system in India** and **promote statistical capacity building.**
  - Under this, training is given to central and state government officials, researchers, academicians and other concerned persons.
- **Importance:**
  - Makes government officials and statisticians skilled in **data collection and analysis.**
  - Familiarizes trainees with the latest techniques and methods in the field of statistics at national and international level.
  - Helpful in encouraging **new research related to statistical science** and ensuring effective use of data in government schemes.
  - Promotes statistical training and research in collaboration with various national and international organisations.

Action on Misleading Video Of Maha Kumbh

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh Police has taken **strict action against the misleading video** being shared on social media regarding Mahakumbh 2025.

Key Points

- **About the issue:**
  - Action has been taken **against 53 social media accounts** in the last one month.

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- Through these accounts, **false information and misleading videos related to Maha Kumbh were posted.**
- On the instructions of the Chief Minister, the police and cyber agencies are keeping an eye on these fake news, so that such misleading information can be stopped from spreading.

Effects on people:

- Due to the videos an attempt was made to spread false and misleading information.
- The effect of this **misinformation creates confusion and fear in the minds of people**. An atmosphere of tension and insecurity is created in the society.

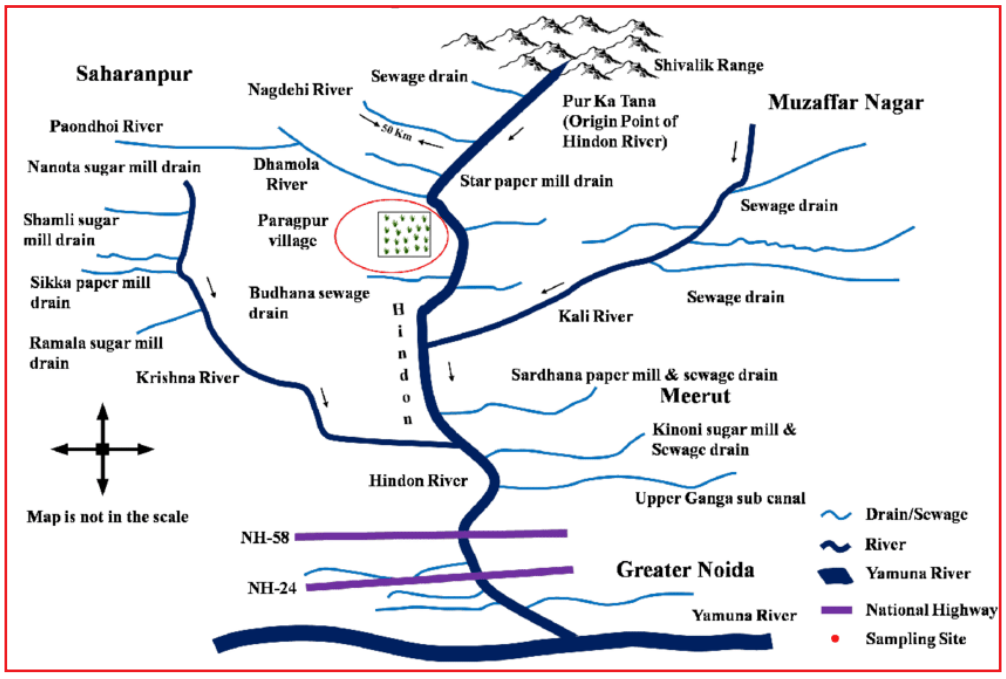
Laws Related to Social Media and Fake News

- It is noteworthy that social media platforms in India already fall under the purview of the Information Technology (IT) Act, 2008.
  - Although there is **no specific law to stop fake news in India.** But there are many organizations in India, which work in this regard.
- The Press Council of India is one such regulatory body **that can warn newspapers, news agencies and their editors** if it is found that they have violated the principles of journalism.
- The News Broadcasters Association (NBA) represents **private television news and current affairs broadcasters and investigates** complaints against them.
- The Broadcasting Content Complaints Council (BCCC) accepts and investigates complaints against TV broadcasters for objectionable TV content and fake news.

Hindon River

Why in News?

Recently, a **large amount of silt and religious material has been dumped into the Hindon River** in Ghaziabad, further polluting the river.



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Key Points

- The Uttar Pradesh Irrigation Department attributed the river's pollution to the release of untreated drains into it, along with mismanagement and neglect of water quality.
- **Pollution in the river:**
  - Dissolved oxygen (DO) ranged from 1.43 to 4.22 mg/l, while the minimum DO required for aquatic life should be 4 mg/l.
  - Total coliform levels range from 260,000 to 380,000 MPN/100 ML, while the standard limit is 1,000 MPN/100 ML.
  - The Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board (UPPCB) has categorised the river's water quality as 'E', which means **the water is suitable only for irrigation, industrial cooling and controlled waste disposal.**
- In 2015, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) declared the Hindon River a dead river , stating that it had **high levels of pollution** and was unfit for bathing in many parts.

Hindon River

- This river **originates from the Shivalik Hills** in Saharanpur district of Uttar Pradesh and flows for about 400 km in the industrial area of western Uttar Pradesh and merges with the Yamuna River in Noida.
  - Hence it is a tributary of Yamuna River.
  - It is a monsoon fed river.
- Its **catchment area** is approximately 7,083 sq. km.
- The Kali (West) River and the Krishna River are the main tributaries of the Hindon River.
- Evidence of the Harappan civilization has been found on the banks of this river, which dates back to 2500 BC.
- Ghaziabad and Noida are situated on the banks of this river.

Exhibition Of Schemes in Maha Kumbh

Why in News?

Recently, an exhibition was organised in the Mahakumbh Mela on the implementation of important schemes by the Central Government and the Uttar Pradesh Government.

Key Points

- **About the exhibition:**
  - This exhibition was **organized by the Rural Development Department of the Government of India** and **the Rural Development Department of the Government of Uttar Pradesh.**
  - Through this an attempt has been made to **depict the implementation of various schemes** and the changing environment of the rural areas through them.
- **The important schemes among them are:**
  - Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act(MGNREGA): Under MGNREGA, various **development works were carried out in rural areas** such as **Amrit-Sarovar**, soak pit, rain water harvesting, construction of drains, tree plantation,etc. which changed the face of the rural area and led to development.
  - National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM): **Through** Saras Haat **of NRLM,** women's livelihood was enhanced by promoting their products.
    - Programs like BC Sakhi **and** Drone Sakhi showed improvement in the economic and social life of women
  - Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Rural): The goal of changing the face of housing in rural areas and giving every family its own pucca house was achieved through model houses under this scheme.
  - Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY): Under PMGSY, rural areas with a population of more than 250 are connected with all-weather roads.
  - Integrated Watershed Management System
  - Swachh Bharat Mission-Gramin
- **Under the MNREGA scheme,** various development works were carried out in rural areas such as **Amrit-Sarovar**, soak pit, rain water harvesting, construction of drains, tree plantation,etc. which changed the face of the rural area and led to development.

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Saras Haat

- **About:**
  - It is a programme to **transform rural India in general** and the **lives of rural women in particular.**
  - During the Mela, **workshops on product packaging and design, communication skills, social media publicity** and **Business to Business marketing** will be organised to educate the rural self-help groups and craftsmen.
- **Organiser:**
  - It is an initiative by the **Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM)** under the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD) organised by the **Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology (CAPART).**
  - **CAPART is an autonomous body** set up by the Ministry of Rural Development to interface between the government and **Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs)** that seek to improve the quality of life in India's rural areas.
- **Objective:**
  - To bring the rural women **Self Help Groups (SHGs)** under one platform so that they can showcase their skills, sell their products, and help them build linkages with bulk buyers.
  - Through participation in **SARAS Aajeevika Mela**, these rural SHG women will get vital national level exposure to understand the demand and taste of urban customers.

Removal Of A High Court Judge

Why in News?

Recently, after the controversial statement of **Allahabad High Court judge**, an **impeachment motion** signed by 55 members has been introduced in **the Rajya Sabha** to remove him from his post.

Key Points

- **About the issue:**
  - The Judge had allegedly **made some communal remarks** at a **Vishwa Hindu Parishad** event in December 2024.
  - Under **the Judges Inquiry Act 1968,** 55 opposition MPs in the Rajya Sabha have given a notice to **introduce a motion to remove** Justice from the office of judge for his alleged misconduct.
- **Procedure for removal of Judges:**
  - Under **Articles 124 and 218** , judges of **the Supreme Court** and **High Courts can be removed by the President on grounds of "proven misbehaviour" or "incapacity".**
  - **To remove this, a resolution must be passed** by both houses of the Parliament:
    - Majority of the total membership of the House.
    - **A special majority** of not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting at the same session.
  - The words "proven misbehaviour" and "incapacity" are not defined in the Constitution.
    - Misconduct, as interpreted by the Supreme Court, includes **wilful misconduct, corruption, lack of integrity or moral turpitude.**
    - **Incapacity** refers **to a physical or mental condition that impedes judicial functioning.**
- **Procedure under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968:**
  - **Notice of Offer:**
    - For this , signatures of **at least 50 Rajya Sabha members or 100 Lok Sabha members are required.**
    - After consultation the Chairman or **Speaker** decides whether to accept the motion or not.
  - **Inquiry Committee constituted:**
    - If the proposal is accepted then **a three-member committee consisting of judges and a renowned jurist is formed.**

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- The committee investigates allegations of:
- If **the judge is acquitted, the motion is dismissed.**
- If **found guilty then the committee report** is sent to **the Parliament for voting.**
  - **Parliamentary approval:**
    - For **the President to remove a judge , both the Houses will have to pass a resolution with a special majority.**

Kashi Tamil Sangamam

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister inaugurated **the third edition of the Kashi Tamil Sangamam** in **Varanasi.** The unique event highlights **India's cultural foundations** and emphasizes the **emotional and creative bond** shared **between Kashi and Tamil Nadu.**

Key Points

- **Inspiration and Vision:**
  - The Sangamam is inspired by the vision of **'Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat (One India, Excellent India)'.**
  - Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister highlighted that the event is part of a **grand spiritual and cultural initiative** aimed at advancing this vision.
  - The event is integrated with the grand **Maha Kumbh 2025** celebrations, elevating the centuries-old tradition and strengthening the vision of uniting India through the Kashi Tamil Sangamam.
- **Significance of Kashi, Kumbh, and Ayodhya:**
  - This edition holds special significance as the **first to be held after the construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya.**
  - Delegates will have the opportunity to immerse themselves in the divinity of Kashi, Kumbh, and Ayodhya.
  - The CM emphasized **Kashi's** historical significance as a **centre of India's cultural heritage and spirituality** and praised the legacy of Tamil literature.
  - The event reconnects participants with this invaluable heritage.
- **Theme of '4S':**
  - This year's Sangamam is centered around the theme of '4S', uniting **India's Saint tradition, Scientists, Social reformers, and Students.**
  - The theme draws inspiration from **Maharishi Agastya, believed to be the sage who bridged north and south India.**
  - The Kashi Tamil Sangamam has become an **effective platform for dialogue** between the people of north and south India.
- **Music, Heritage, and Devotion:**
  - The Union Education Minister stated that the **celebration weaves together music, heritage, and devotion** on the banks of **the Ganga.**
  - He emphasized that **development and heritage must go hand in hand**.
- **Union Government Initiatives:**
  - Initiatives such as the establishment of **the National Digital Repository of the Indian Knowledge System** to **digitize ancient texts** and use **Artificial Intelligence (AI) for research** were highlighted.
  - **The Bharatiya Bhasha Pustaka Yojana**, which will **translate textbooks into 22 Indian languages**, creating a **"digital Maha Kumbh" for students.**

Kashi Tamil Sangamam Significance

- The ancient connection between **Kashi (Uttar Pradesh)** and Tamil Nadu dates back to the **15th century** when **King Parakrama Pandya**, ruler of the region around **Madurai**, traveled to Kashi to bring back the **lingam for his temple.**
  - While returning, he **stopped to rest under a tree** — but when he tried to continue his journey, **the cow carrying the lingam refused to move.**

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- Parakrama Pandya **understood this to be the Lord's wish, and installed the lingam there**, a place that came to be known as **Sivakasi, Tamil Nadu.**
- For devotees **who could not visit Kashi, the Pandyas had built** the Kasi Viswanathar Temple in what is today **Tenkasi in southwestern Tamil Nadu,** close to the state's border with Kerala.

NSDC International Academy

Why in News?

The State Minister of Education inaugurated **the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) International Academy in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.**

Key Points

- **About the Academy:**
  - The Academy is equipped with **state-of-the-art facilities**, designed to provide world-class **skill development and training programmes.**
  - It is a flagship initiative of NSDC under the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE),** dedicated to **transforming India's workforce** by providing globally recognized training and certification.
  - The institute will offer **specialized courses in various fields including foreign languages, health care, employability skills and aviation.**
- **Objective:**
  - Bridging the gap between Indian youth and global employment opportunities.
  - To act as a **centre of excellence**, providing tailored training programmes tailored to the skill demands of countries like Germany, Japan and Israel.
  - Promoting innovation and entrepreneurship.

Prime Minister's Skill Development Scheme

- **About:**
  - This scheme was **launched in the year 2015** with the aim of training the youth.
  - It is the **flagship programme of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)** and is being implemented by **the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).**
  - This scheme replaced the previous **Standard Training Assessment and Reward (STAR) scheme.**
- **Objective:**
  - To provide skill training to a large number of Indian youth, enable them to earn a livelihood by making them employable and motivate them for the same.
  - To **promote standardisation in the certification process** and introduce skills registration process.
  - To expand the existing workforce and train people as required.

Trash Skimmer Machine

Why in News?

To realise the dream of **a clean India and to keep the Triveni Sangam clean and pure , trash skimmer machines have been installed** in Prayagraj , which are removing 10 to 15 tonnes of garbage from **the Ganga and Yamuna rivers** every day.

Key Points

- Trash skimmer machines have been installed in 2021 before **the Maha Kumbh to keep the Triveni Sangam clean and pure.**
- **Trash Skimmer Machine:**
  - It is a machine that collects floating debris from the surface of water.
  - This machine picks up **all the items like flowers, leaves, floating garbage, plastic, bottles etc. from the river** in various ways and brings them to the shore, which are later disposed of in proper ways.
  - This machine is used **to clean rivers, ports and seas.**
  - It also helps in removing **aquatic weeds (water hyacinth).**

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Water Hyacinth

- **Water hyacinth**, scientifically known as **Eichhornia crassipes Mart. (Pontederiaceae),** is an **aquatic weed common in waterbodies across South Asia, including India.**
- This is **not an indigenous species** but was **introduced to India during the British colonial rule** as an **ornamental aquatic plant from South America.**
- The plant **produces beautiful purple flowers** that have **high aesthetic value.**

Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)

- The Government of India laid the foundation of the Swachh Bharat Mission **on 2 October 2014 (Gandhi Jayanti).** This mission covers all rural and urban areas.
- The urban component of this mission **is implemented by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs** and **the rural component is implemented by the Ministry of Jal Shakti.**

Indian Art History Congress

Why in News?

The **32nd Indian Art History Congress** was held from 8 to 10 February 2025 **at Indian Institute of Heritage, Noida.**

Key Points

- **About the Conference:**
  - The theme of the conference was **"Rendering Indian Epics in Art and Culture".**
  - **It aimed** to highlight the diverse forms of artistic expressions **based on the epics.**
    - **The Mahabharata and Ramayana,** with their teachings on duty, righteousness, and justice, have shaped the way of life for many.
    - Their ideals resonate across cultures, both in India and beyond.
  - It was organised by **Indian Heritage Institute, Noida under the Ministry of Culture.**
- **Importance:**
  - The conference **highlighted the varied forms of artistic expressions** based on the epics through oral, textual and visual media.
  - Discussion on the influence of epics and their various artistic forms from ancient to contemporary times.
  - To promote interest in Indian art and to work for its **preservation and protection.**
  - To make efforts to protect the tangible and intangible **cultural heritage.**

Indian Art History Congress (IAHC)

- It is an **all-India institution** that **studies Indian art heritage.**
- It aims to **encourage in-depth research** and discussion **on various aspects of Indian art history and culture.**
- This organization works for the **preservation of Indian cultural heritage, tangible and intangible art forms.**
- It provides a platform for experienced and young scholars to exchange their art related research and ideas.
- Its **headquarters** is located in Guwahati.

New Expressways Approved

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has approved the construction of **7 new expressways** to facilitate road transport in the state.

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Key Points

- **About the Expressway:**
  - The Chief Minister has announced to **invest Rs 50 thousand crores** on this project.
  - These 7 expressways will connect 56 districts of Uttar Pradesh between Lucknow and Delhi.
  - The total length of these seven expressways will be 866 km which will be completed in the coming 2-3 years.
  - This step will play an important role in the Uttar Pradesh government's mission to make the state's economy **one trillion dollars**.
- **Proposed 7 expressways:**
  - **Chitrakoot Link Expressway:** This 120 km long expressway will connect various districts of Bundelkhand.
  - **Jhansi Link Expressway:** Its length will be 100 km and through this the major districts of Bundelkhand will get direct connectivity with the expressway.
  - **Jewar Link Expressway:** This expressway will connect **Jewar Airport** to Yamuna Expressway so that people can directly connect to the airport.
  - **Vindhya Expressway:** Its length is 320 km and this expressway will provide better transport facilities to the backward districts of Uttar Pradesh.
    - In this, districts like Mirzapur, Banaras, Jaunpur will be connected to Prayagraj.
  - **Vindhya Purvanchal Link Expressway:** Its length is 100 km and will be constructed between Mirzapur to Ghazipur to connect Vindhyachal region with **Purvanchal.**
  - **Lucknow Link Expressway:** This 50 km long expressway will connect Purvanchal and Agra Expressway.
- **Agra-Lucknow Ganga Expressway Link Road:** The length of this link expressway will be 90 km, which will be built to connect **Ganga Expressway** between Prayagraj and Meerut to Lucknow.

Expressway network in Uttar Pradesh

- Uttar Pradesh has the largest expressway network in the country. The following are the major expressways of Uttar Pradesh-
  - Yamuna Expressway: **Uttar Pradesh's first expressway**
  - Ganga Expressway: **The longest expressway of Uttar Pradesh**
  - Agra-Lucknow Expressway: Greenfield Expressway of Uttar Pradesh
  - Delhi-Meerut Expressway
  - Purvanchal Expressway
  - Bundelkhand Expressway
  - Gorakhpur Link Expressway
  - Lucknow Kanpur Expressway

Guru Ravidas Jayanti

Why in News?

Guru Ravidas Jayanti was **celebrated in Uttar Pradesh on 12 February 2025**. The Chief Minister extended his **heartfelt greetings and best wishes to the people of the state.**

Key Points

- **About Guru Ravidas:**
  - **Ravidas Jayanti is celebrated on** the **full moon day of Magh month** according to the Hindu lunar calendar.
  - Guru Ravidas or Raidas was a 14th-century saint and **reformer of the Bhakti movement in North India.**
  - He is believed to have been **born in a cobbler family in Varanasi.**
  - He dedicated his entire life towards the abolition of the caste system and openly despised the concept of Brahminical society.
  - His devotional songs had an immediate impact on the Bhakti movement and about 41 of his poems **were included in the Sikh religious text 'Guru Granth Sahib'.**
    - Saint Raidas was a disciple of Swami Ramanand. While Mirabai is said to be the disciple of Saint Raidas.

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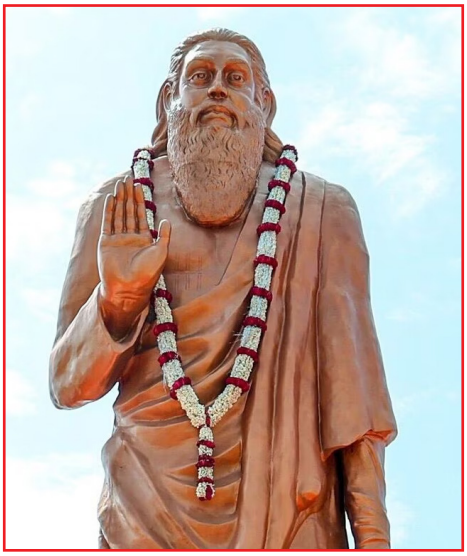
- He founded the Radasiya or Ravidasiya sect.



Pollutants found in Varuna River

Why in News?

Recently, zoologists from **Banaras Hindu University (BHU) in a research** confirmed the presence of about 1000 types of **pollutants in the water of Varuna river.**

Key Points

- **Pollutants:** Research has found that **580 pollutants** have been found in Varuna river and 349 in **Assi river**. These include toxic chemicals like **Tert alkylphenols, Octylphenols, Butylphenols, Hexadecylphenols.**
- **Effects:** These pollutants are not only endangering **the ecosystem of the river but** also human life in the following ways:
  - **Effect on aquatic life** : Pollution is adversely affecting the lives of fish and other aquatic creatures. Due to which their **mortality rate** is increasing and **reproductive capacity** is decreasing.
    - Its water is also polluting the water of **River Ganga.**
  - **Deterioration of water quality** : Pollutants degrade the quality of water, thereby reducing the availability of potable water.
  - **Effects on human life:** Drinking polluted water can cause **health problems in humans.** Not only can it lead to reduced fertility, but these pollutants can also cause serious diseases like **cancer**.
- **Previous report:** Earlier also, **the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board** had reported that the pollution of Varuna river was at dangerous levels. Before joining the Ganga in Varanasi, **the Biological Oxygen Demand (BOD) of Varuna** was 12.40 milligrams per liter.
- **Revival of Varuna River:** Although the Uttar Pradesh government is continuously making efforts to revive the Varuna River in **Varanasi , such as** desilting from Bhadohi to **Ganga-Varuna Sangam , increasing green cover by planting trees along the river. Along with this, wetland** areas will be created in various development blocks, which will improve **the groundwater level** and the water level of the river will be normal.
  - Recently, **the Green Strategic Partnership** between **India** and **Denmark** has resulted in the establishment of **Smart Laboratory on Clean Rivers (SLCR) in Varanasi. It aims to revive the Varuna River** using a sustainable approach.

Varuna River

- It is a small tributary of the Ganga.
- It originates from Phulpur in **Prayagraj** district and meets the river Ganga near Sarai Mohana in Varanasi district.
- The district 'Varanasi' is named after two rivers, **Varuna and Assi.**
- **Sarnath** is situated at the confluence of the rivers Ganga and Varuna.

Uttar Pradesh Emerges As A Tourism Hub

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh has emerged as a **new hub of tourism** by preserving its **historical, religious and cultural heritage**.

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Key Points

- **Tourism in Uttar Pradesh:**
  - Tourism development in Uttar Pradesh is boosting the **state's economy and creating jobs for thousands of people.**
    - More than **65 crore tourists visited Uttar Pradesh in the year 2024,** making it the tourism capital of India.
  - Religious sites like the **Shri Ram Temple in Ayodhya, Kashi Vishwanath Temple in Varanasi, and Mathura-Vrindavan** have made Uttar Pradesh a world-class spiritual center.
- **Swadesh Darshan 2.0:**
  - **Naimisharanya, Prayagraj and Mahoba** are being developed under the **Swadesh Darshan 2.0 scheme** of the Central Government.
- **Importance of Tourism:**
  - Tourism has become a key engine of economic growth in Uttar Pradesh.
  - As one of the fastest-growing sectors, it plays a vital role in **boosting trade, creating jobs, attracting investments, enhancing infrastructure, and promoting social inclusion.**

Swadesh Darshan Scheme

- It was **launched in 2014-15** for **integrated development of theme-based tourist circuits** — Buddhist Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Desert Circuit, Eco Circuit, Heritage Circuit, Northeast Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Sufi Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Ramayana Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Tirthankar Circuit, Wildlife Circuit and Tribal Circuit.
- It is **100% centrally funded** and efforts are made to achieve convergence with other schemes of Central and State Governments and also to leverage the voluntary funding available for **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)** initiatives of Central Public Sector Undertakings and Corporate Sector.
- **Swadesh Darshan 2.0:**
  - It is **not an incremental change but a generational shift to evolve the Swadesh Darshan Scheme** as a holistic mission to develop sustainable and responsible tourism destinations.
  - It will help develop sustainable and responsible destinations with a tourist and destination centric approach.

Uttar Pradesh Inland Waterways Authority

Why in News?

Recently, the Uttar Pradesh government approved the **formation of 'Uttar Pradesh Inland Waterways Authority'** to **promote water transport and water tourism in the state.**

Key Points

- **Uttar Pradesh Inland Waterways Authority:**
  - Its objective is to **promote water transport** by developing waterways, which will **reduce pressure on road and rail networks.**
  - Major cities situated along the **banks of the Ganga River** and other waterways hold significant potential for **water tourism development.**
  - **Structure:**
    - The Authority will be **headed by a Minister of Transport** or an **expert in Waterways, Shipping, Navigation, Ports and Maritime Affairs** nominated by **the Chief Minister.**
- The Vice-Chairman will be appointed by the State Government.
- A **representative nominated by the Chairman of the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)** will also be its member.
- The **Transport Commissioner of Uttar Pradesh** will be the Chief Executive Officer of this Authority.
- **Waterways in Uttar Pradesh:**
  - It is notable that **111 national waterways** have been **declared in the country**, of which **Uttar Pradesh has a total of 11 national waterways** including **Ganga and Yamuna.**

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Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)

- IWAI is **a statutory body** under **the Ministry of Shipping.**
- It was constituted under the **IWAI Act, 1985** by the Indian Parliament.
- Its **headquarter is** located in **Noida, Uttar Pradesh**. While **regional offices** are in **Patna, Kolkata, Guwahati and Kochi** and **sub-offices in Prayagraj (formerly Allahabad), Varanasi, Bhagalpur, Rakka and Kollam.**

Radar Factory

Why in News?

A **radar manufacturing factory** will be set up in the Defence Industrial Corridor at Bijhamai village near the Agra Lucknow Expressway at a cost of Rs 400 crore.

Key Points

- **About the Factory:**
  - **Spread over 60 hectares**, the factory will be set up by **Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited.**
  - The radar manufacturing facility will **improve the defence system of the country** as high quality manufacturing of radars will help in providing better security and surveillance to the army.
  - This factory will help **make India self-reliant** in the manufacturing of radars **and other defense equipment, thereby reducing dependence on foreign countries**.

Defence Industrial Corridor (DIC)

- It is a **flagship initiative** of the **Central Government** aimed at strengthening and making India's defence industry self-reliant.
- Defense corridor is a route which includes many cities. Industries are set up in these cities for the **manufacture of military equipment.**
- **Importance:**
  - This will help in making the country self-reliant in the field of defence production and promote 'Make in India' **, which will reduce our imports and promote the export of these items to other countries.**
  - It will boost the defence manufacturing ecosystem through coordinated development of technologies, fostering growth of private domestic manufacturers including MSMEs and start-ups.

Bundelkhand: Center Of Solar Energy

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh is progressing rapidly in the field of solar energy and Bundelkhand has emerged as **a major centre of energy ,** playing an important role in this progress.

Key Points

- **Development of Solar Energy in UP:**
  - The government has implemented a comprehensive **solar energy policy** , under which various incentives are being provided to solar energy projects.
  - In 2024, **17 solar power plants** with a capacity of about 1100 MW have become operational in the state..
  - These solar plants have created direct employment opportunities, underlining the significant economic impact of renewable energy expansion in Uttar Pradesh.
- **Role of Bundelkhand:**
  - Bundelkhand has emerged as a **major region in the field of renewable energy** and is promoting regional development and employment.
  - The **abundant sunlight and climatic conditions** in this region make it **ideal for solar energy production.**
- **Major projects:**
  - Solar power units of 4 thousand MW have been installed in Bundelkhand. Out of the 10 new solar plants installed in this region **, 995 MW** have started operating.
    - **Jhansi Solar Power Project** 600 MW project by TUSCO Limited commissioned in January 2025.

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- Along with this, a 100 MW solar plant by Fourth Partner Energy started in **Babina, Jhansi with an investment of Rs1200 crore in mid-2024.**
- Another significant development in Bundelkhand **is the Sun Source Energy Solar Open Access Project,** which contributes an additional 135 MW to the state's energy grid.

Bundelkhand

- **Bundelkhand** is a geographical and cultural region located on the border of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.
- It is a **semi-arid region comprising seven districts** of Uttar Pradesh (Jhansi, Jalaun, Lalitpur, Mahoba, Hamirpur, Banda and Chitrakoot).
- It is also a mountain range. Jhansi is **the largest city of Bundelkhand.**
- Bundelkhand was earlier known as **Jejabhukti or Jejakabhukti** , but from the time of the Bundelas in the 14th century it came to be known as Bundelkhand.

Asteroid Discovery in Uttar Pradesh

Why in News?

Recently, National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) has recognized Daksh Malik, a Class 9 student from Noida, for his **provisional discovery of an** asteroid, currently labeled as **'2023 OG40.'**

Key Points

- **Participation in the International Asteroid Discovery Project (IADP):**
  - Along with two school friends, the student has actively participated in the **IADP** which introduced them to the **International Astronomical Search Collaboration (IASC).**
  - The IASC, a **NASA-affiliated citizen science initiative**, enables global participation in asteroid discovery.
  - It allows students and astronomy enthusiasts worldwide to **analyze celestial data and contribute to scientific research.**
- **A Rare Achievement:**
  - Despite more than 6,000 participants joining the IADP annually, only a few successfully identify new asteroids.
  - Before this discovery, only five students from the country had ever achieved a named asteroid discovery.
- **Naming the Asteroid:**
  - This achievement also gives **the privilege of naming the** celestial body after its verification process, which may take around four to five years.

Asteroids

- Asteroids, also referred to as **minor planets**, are remnants from the early stages of our solar system's formation approximately **4.6 billion years ago.**
- They predominantly exhibit **irregular shapes**, though some **display nearly spherical forms.**
- Many asteroids are accompanied by **small moons**, with some even having two moons.
- Additionally, binary asteroids consist of **two similar-sized rocky bodies** orbiting each other, and there are also triple asteroid systems.

Surajpur Wetland

Why in News?

The Greater Noida Authority has developed a project to safeguard and preserve the Surajpur wetland.

Key Points

- **Threat from Polluted Wastewater:**
  - The wetland faces a **serious threat due to the indiscriminate discharge of highly polluted wastewater** into its channels, endangering its ecosystem.
- **Need for Technical Assistance:**
  - According to the authority, research institutes, non-government organizations (NGOs), and environmental experts can provide technical support to protect and restore the wetland.

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- **Ecological Significance:**
  - Located in the heart of the industrial city of **Greater Noida**, the Surajpur wetland serves as a vital **wildlife habitat**, making its conservation crucial.
- **Geographic Spread and Features:**
  - The sanctuary spans 325 hectares, including a 60-hectare natural lake situated along **the Dadri-Surajpur-Chhalera (DSC) road,** approximately 20 km from Noida.
- **Haven for Migratory Birds:**
  - During the winter season, the wetland attracts various species of **migratory birds**, enhancing its ecological and environmental value.

Surajpur Wetland

- **Location and Administrative Jurisdiction:**
  - The wetland is **located near Surajpur Village** in Dadri Tehsil of **Gautam Budh Nagar district.**
  - It falls under the jurisdiction of the Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority, Uttar Pradesh.
- **Urban Wetland in the Yamuna Basin:**
  - The wetland serves as an excellent example of an urban wetland within the **Yamuna River basin.**
- **Ecological Importance and Green Cover:**
  - It acts as a green lung for Greater Noida, covering a catchment area of 308 hectares, with 60 hectares dedicated to the waterbody.
- **Recognition as an Important Bird Area (IBA):**
  - BirdLife International has classified the wetland as an **Important Bird Area (IBA)** due to its significance in **bird conservation.**
- **Breeding and Wintering Habitat for Waterfowl:**
  - The wetland provides a breeding ground for waterfowl such as **Spot-billed Duck, Lesser-whistling Duck, Cotton Pygmy Goose, and Comb Duck.**
  - It also supports wintering waterfowl, including **Red-crested Pochard, Ferruginous Pochard, Bar-headed Goose, Greylag Goose, Common Teal, Northern Shoveler, and Gadwall.**
- **Diverse Wildlife Presence:**
  - In addition to a rich bird population, the wetland sustains six mammal species, including **Nilgai, Indian Grey Mongoose, Indian Hare, Golden Jackal, and Five-striped Squirrel.**
- **Environmental Threats:**
  - The wetland faces significant threats due to the indiscriminate discharge of highly polluted wastewater into its channels, posing risks to its ecosystem.

World Wetland Day 2025

Why in News?

The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) organised the **World Wetlands Day 2025** celebrations at the **Parvati Arga Ramsar Site**, Gonda, Uttar Pradesh (UP) on **2nd February 2025.**

Key Points

- **About:**
  - It is observed annually to raise awareness about the **importance of wetlands** and marks the adoption of the **Ramsar Convention on Wetlands** in **1971** in Ramsar, Iran.
  - **Theme for 2025:** Protecting Wetlands for our Common Future.

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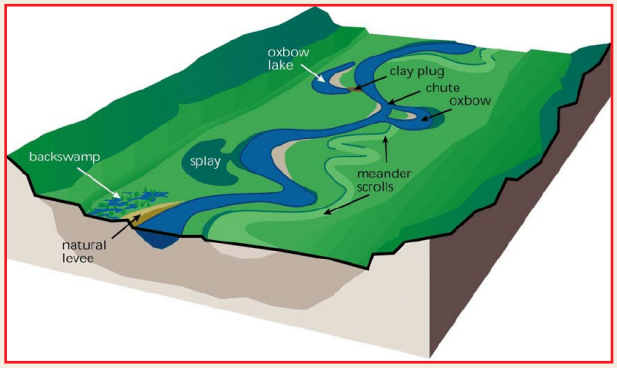
- **New Corridor:**
  - The government announced a new **nature-culture tourism corridor** will be developed between **Ayodhya and Devi Patan** in UP.
- **Amrit Dharohar Initiative:**
  - Amrit Dharohar was launched in **June 2023** to conserve Ramsar Sites that focuses on **four key components** i.e., **Species and Habitat Conservation, Nature Tourism, Wetlands Livelihood and Wetlands Carbon**.
- **Threat:**
  - The biggest threat to wetlands is **pollution from industrial and human effluents**, which degrade these ecosystems.

Parvati Arga Ramsar Site

- **About:** It is a **permanent freshwater environment**, consisting of **two oxbow lakes i.e., Parvati and Arga**, which are **rain-fed** and located in the **terai region** (Gangetic plains).
  - The nearby **Tikri Forest** is also being developed as an **eco-tourism site.**
  - **Oxbow lakes** are **U-shaped lakes** formed when a meander of a **river is cut off,** creating a **standalone water body.**



- **Ecological Significance:** It is a refuge for **critically endangered white-rumped vulture, Indian vulture,** and **endangered Egyptian vulture**.
  - Migratory birds like **Eurasian coots, mallards, greylag geese, northern pintails**, and **red-crested pochards** visit the site in the winter months.
- **Invasive Species:** It faces threats from **invasive species**, notably the **common water hyacinth.**
- **Cultural Landmarks:** The region is home to cultural landmarks such as the birthplaces of **Maharishi Patanjali and Goswami Tulsidas**, boosting religious and cultural tourism.

New Rules For Demolishing Unauthorised Constructions

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh government has issued **guidelines for agencies** before demolishing unauthorised constructions.

- Notices must be served, and an opportunity for a **personal hearing** must be provided before finalising demolition.

Key Points

- **New Rules for Demolishion:**
  - **Mandatory Show Cause Notice & Waiting Period:**
    - No demolition should occur without issuing a show cause notice.
    - Agencies must wait **15 days** from the date of notice receipt before ordering demolition. The rules provides **an appellate opportunity**, demolition must be delayed for **15 days** after the final order.
    - Owners/occupants should be given **15 days** to remove or demolish unauthorised structures themselves.
  - **Transparency Measures:**
    - A **digital portal** must be set up within three months to document all actions, including **notices, replies,** and **orders**.
    - Notices should be sent to the **District Magistrate's (DM) office via email**, with automated acknowledgment.
    - Minutes of personal hearings must be recorded.
  - **Demolition Orders & Compliance:**
    - **Final orders should specify:**
- Whether the structure is **compoundable** (can be regularised by paying fees).

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- Details of the **unauthorised/non-compoundable** portions.
- Why demolition is necessary.
  - Non-compliance with these rules may result in **contempt proceedings** and **prosecution** of officials.
  - **Legal & Administrative Observations:**
    - Many steps in the new rules already exist under different Acts.
    - New features aim to **improve transparency and consistency** in demolitions.
    - Issues of **hasty demolitions** and **pending old demolition orders**, leading to **malpractice** and **unauthorized constructions.**
    - Municipal officials confirm compliance and clarify that temporary encroachments are handled under the UP Municipal Corporation Act, 1959.

Stampede At Maha Kumbh 2025

Why in News?

A tragic stampede took place at the Triveni Sangam (confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati) in **Prayagraj** as thousands of devotees gathered for the **Mauni Amavasya** 'Amrit Snan' at the Maha Kumbh.

- The massive crowd surge created chaos, leading to a **stampede** that caused **multiple casualties** and **injuries**.

Key Points

- **Significance of Amrit Snan:**
  - The **Amrit Snan on Mauni Amavasya** is the most significant ritual of the Maha Kumbh 2025, and event held even greater importance due to the **rare celestial alignment of 'Triveni Yog,'** which occurs once every **144 years.**
    - Nearly **five crore devotees** had already arrived a day before the Amrit Snan, with the number expected to reach **10 crore** on the day itself.
- **Mauni Amavasya:**
  - **About:**
    - **Mauni Amavasya,** also known as **Maghi Amavasya** or **Magh Amavasya**, is an important day that occurs during the **Magha month** on the **new moon (Amavasya).**
    - This spiritually significant day is deeply rooted in the traditions of the North Indian calendar.
    - It is marked by **introspection, silence,** and **soul purification** through sacred rituals, with the **holy dip in the** Ganges River being one of its most prominent practices.
  - **Significance of Mauni Amavasya 2025:**
    - **"Mauni"** is derived from the **Sanskrit word "Mauna,"** meaning **"silence**
    - **"** Observing a vow of silence on this day is a common practice among devotees, promoting **spiritual discipline** and **inner peace.**
    - Silence is seen as a powerful tool for **self-purification** and **spiritual growth.**
    - A **holy dip** in the **Triveni Sangam** during the **Kumbh Mela** is believed to cleanse devotees of past sins and lead them toward **salvation** or **Moksha.**
    - Additionally, performing rituals to **honour ancestors** on **Mauni Amavasya** is thought to bring happiness and blessings, as well as help alleviate Pitru Dosha, offering relief to those facing ancestral karmic imbalances.

Potential Petroleum Reserves in Ballia

Why in News?

The Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has started drilling operations in **Ballia, Uttar Pradesh,** after **geological surveys** indicated the **possibility of petroleum reserves** in the region.

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Key Points

- **Survey and Exploration**: ONGC conducted **satellite, geochemical, gravity-magnetic,** and **magneto-telluric (MT) surveys** over the **last three years**, confirming the possibility of oil and natural gas reserves.
  - **Magnetotellurics (MT)** is a geophysical method that uses natural changes in the **Earth's magnetic** and **electric fields** to study underground **electrical resistivity.**
- **Drilling Operations**: The project, with an **estimated cost of ₹100 crore**, involves drilling up to **3,001 meters** at a site near **Sagar Pali village** in **Gram Sabha Vaina (Rattuchak).**
- **Land and Infrastructure**: ONGC has leased **eight acres of land** for **three years**.
- **Potential Impact**: If petroleum reserves are confirmed, the project could significantly contribute to the energy sector, boost local employment, and transform the economy of eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)

- **Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC),** formerly **Oil and Natural Gas Commission,** was established in **1956**.
- In **1994**, Oil and **Natural Gas Commission** was converted into a Corporation, and in **1997** it was recognized as one of the **Navratnas** by the Government of India.
  - Subsequently, it had been conferred with **Maharatna status** in the year **2010**.

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- It is the **largest crude oil** and **natural gas company** in India, contributing around **70%** to Indian domestic production.

Ganga Basin

- The headwaters of the Ganga called the **'Bhagirathi'** are fed by the Gangotri Glacier and joined by the Alaknanda **at** Devprayag in Uttarakhand.
- At **Haridwar,** Ganga emerges from the mountains to the plains.
- The **Ganga** is joined by many tributaries from the Himalayas, a few of them being major rivers such as the Yamuna, the Ghaghara, the Gandak, and the Kosi.

UP Tableau At Republic Day Parade

Why in News?

The Republic Day **tableau of Uttar Pradesh** celebrated the ongoing Maha Kumbh **in Prayagraj,** featuring depictions of '**Samudra Manthan,' 'Amrit Kalash,'** and holy men bathing on **the banks of** Sangam.

Key Points

- **Main Theme and Focus:**
  - The focus of the 76th Republic Day celebrations is **75 years of the enactment of the Constitution.**
  - The theme for the tableaux is **'Swarnim Bharat: Virasat aur Vikas',** highlighting India's heritage and progress.
- **Uttar Pradesh Tableau Highlights:**
  - The tableau **showcases the grandeur of Maha Kumbh 2025,** portraying a **metaphorical 'Sangam' of 'virasat' (heritage) and 'vikas' (development)**.

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- A prominent **'Amrit Kalash'** tilted forward symbolizes **the flow of the sacred 'Amritdhara.'**
- Seers and saints are depicted blowing conch shells, performing 'snan' at Sangam, and meditating, while devotees immerse themselves in the holy waters of **the Ganga, Yamuna, and mythical Saraswati.**

Mythological and Cultural Depictions:

- The tableau features a vivid depiction of the **mythical tale of 'Samudra Manthan'**, symbolizing the historical and cultural significance of Maha Kumbh.
- On the back side, **14 gems that emerged from the churning of the ocean are artistically represented.**

Technological Features of Maha Kumbh 2025:

- The tableau emphasizes technological advancements through the Integrated Command and Control Center (ICCC) for efficient security and crowd management at the Kumbh.
- This **highlights the state-of-the-art digital preparations** for managing the massive gathering.

Republic Day

- Republic Day commemorates the adoption of the Constitution of India on 26th January 1950, and the country's transition to a republic which came into effect on 26th January 1950.
  - The constitution was adopted by the Constituent Assembly of India on 26th November 1949 and came into effect on 26th January 1950.
- The Constitution of India repealed the **Indian Independence Act 1947 and Government of India Act 1935** when it became effective on 26th January 1950. India ceased to be a dominion of the British Crown and became a **sovereign, democratic republic with a constitution.**

News Regional Office Of Inland Waterways Authority

Why in News?

The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) upgraded its sub-office **in Varanasi** into a regional office to effectively implement Inland Water Transport (IWT) activities on National Waterway-1 (NW-1) along the River Ganga.

Key Points

IWAI Regional Offices:

- The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) operates under the Union Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways.
- It currently has **five regional offices in Guwahati (Assam), Patna (Bihar), Kochi (Kerala), Bhubaneswar (Odisha), and Kolkata (West Bengal).**
- The ne**wly established regional office in Varanasi** (Uttar Pradesh), **becomes the sixth.**
  - The Varanasi office will **manage operations over a 487-kilometre stretch from Majhua to the Varanasi Multi-Modal Terminal (MMT)** and up to Prayagraj.
  - It will **also oversee works related to other National Waterways (NWs)** in Uttar Pradesh.

Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP):

- The office will prioritize implementing **the World Bank**-supported Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP).
- It aims to **enhance the capacity of River Ganga (NW-1)** through:
  - **River conservancy works** such as bandalling and maintenance dredging.
  - Construction of key infrastructure, including MMTs at **Varanasi, Sahibganj, and Haldia**, an intermodal terminal at Kalighat, and a new navigational lock at Farakka (West Bengal).

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- **Promoting cruise tourism** and seamless cargo movement along the waterway.
- Development of Community Jetties:

- Under JMVP, **60 community jetties** are being constructed across four states: **Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and West Bengal.**
- These jetties **aim to benefit local commuters**, small and marginal farmers, artisans, and fishing communities.
- The Varanasi Regional Office will monitor and ensure efficient execution of these activities.
- National Waterways in Uttar Pradesh:
  - Uttar Pradesh has around **30 rivers, with 10 declared as National Waterways.**
  - The office will oversee development works on River Ganga and its tributaries, including **Betwa, Chambal, Gomti, Tons, Varuna, Gandak, Ghagra, Karamnasa, and Yamuna.**

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.**

Inland Water Transport (IWT)

- **About:**
  - Inland water transport refers to the transportation of people, goods, and materials via waterways such as **rivers, canals, lakes, and other navigable bodies of water** that are located within a country's boundaries.
  - IWT is the **most economical mode of transportation,** especially for bulk cargo like coal, iron ore, cement, food grains and fertilizer. Presently, it remains **underutilized at a share of 2% in India's modal mix.**
- **Socio-Economic Benefits of IWT:**
  - Cheaper operating cost and relatively lesser fuel consumption
  - Less polluting mode of transportation
  - Lesser requirement of land relative to other modes of transportation
  - More environment friendly mode of transportation
  - Moreover, waterways can be **used for recreational purposes such as boating and fishing.**

Dhanauri Wetland

Why in News?

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) instructed **the Uttar Pradesh government** to submit the status of notifying the Dhanauri water body near Jewar airport as a wetland within four weeks.

Key Points

- **State Government's Stand:**
  - The Uttar Pradesh's counsel stated that **the government is in the process of notifying Dhanauri as a wetland.**
  - The NGT bench questioned the need for three months to complete the notification process when the site has already been identified for wetland status.
- **The Divisional Forest Officer (DFO):**
  - The DFO of Gautam Buddha Nagar informed the NGT through an affidavit that **the proposed Dhanauri wetland spans 112.89 hectares.**
  - The area **primarily includes privately owned land** located across the villages of Dhanauri Kalan, Thasrana, and Amipur Bangar in the Sadar tehsil of Gautam Buddha Nagar.
  - The DFO requested **three months to consult with landowners and obtain their consent** before proceeding with further action.
- **Wetland Notification and Ramsar Site Process:**
  - State governments **can notify lakes and water bodies as wetlands** for protection.
  - Ramsar site designation requires approval from the Central Government, based on recommendations by state governments.

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- Wetlands qualifying under ecological and biodiversity criteria are identified under **the international Ramsar Convention treaty of 1971,** which ensures special conservation measures.

Dhanauri Wetland

- **Location:**
  - Situated in **Greater Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar district, Uttar Pradesh.**
  - Lies close to the **Okhla Bird Sanctuary** and **Surajpur Wetland**.
  - Positioned within the floodplains of the Yamuna Basin, about 15 km from the **River Yamuna.**
- **Ecological Significance:**
  - Composed mainly of marshes, the wetland is an essential habitat for the vulnerable **Sarus Crane** (***Antigone antigone***).
  - Hosts a variety of bird species, including:
    - Common teal
    - Mallard
    - Northern pintail
    - Greylag geese
    - Bar-headed geese
    - Woolly-necked stork
    - Black-necked stork
    - Painted stork
    - Eurasian marsh harrier
- **Conservation Status:**
  - Recognized as an **Important Bird Area (IBA)** by **BirdLife International.**

UP Foundation Day 2025

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh, **celebrating 75 years as a state**, was renamed from the **United Provinces** in 1950 and plays a pivotal role in India's politics and economy.

- The state has grown in **political and economic prominence**, setting ambitious goals like becoming a **trillion-dollar economy**.

Key Points

- **Uttar Pradesh Foundation Day 2025:**
  - **The theme** for Uttar Pradesh Foundation Day 2025 is **"Development and Heritage: Uttar Pradesh on the Path to Progress".**
  - The state government will confer the **'Uttar Pradesh Gaurav Samman' award** on **six individuals** from the fields of **music, agriculture** and **education** during the **state foundation day.**
- **Historical Significance:**
  - Uttar Pradesh, formerly known as **United Provinces**, was renamed on **24 January, 1950,** by the **governor general of India** through the **United Provinces (Alteration of Name) Order, 1950**.
  - The state began celebrating 24 January as **UP Foundation Day** in **2018**, following a suggestion by governor **Ram Naik**.
- **Political Importance:**
  - The state contributes **80 Members of Parliament** to the **Lok Sabha**, giving it considerable influence in national politics.
  - It has produced **nine Prime Ministers**, including the current **PM, Narendra Modi**, who represents **Varanasi** in Parliament.
- **Economic Aspirations:**
  - Uttar Pradesh strives to move beyond its **BIMARU (economically underdeveloped)** tag and achieve a **trillion-dollar economy** status.
    - **BIMARU:** Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh
- **Introduction of ODOP Scheme:**
  - The **One District One Product (ODOP) scheme** was launched during the **first Foundation Day** celebrations in **2018** to promote local industries and crafts.
    - The occasion is aimed to launch new schemes and initiatives aimed at boosting the state's development and welfare.

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Uttar Pradesh's First Double-Decker Bus Restaurant

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh's **first double-decker bus restaurant**, named **Pumpkin**, has been inaugurated at the Media Centre in the Maha Kumbh Mela area, Prayagraj.

Key Points

- The restaurant serves exclusively **vegetarian** and **satvic food**, catering to the religious atmosphere of the **Kumbh Mela.**
- Designed to be affordable, it aims to accommodate the budgets of common devotees.
- Founder of the **Pumpkin brand** announced plans to expand the **brand** to other religious destinations such as **Kashi, Mathura**, and **Ayodhya.**

Maha Kumbh

- **Kumbh Mela** comes under United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
- It is the largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims on earth, during which participants bathe or take a dip in a sacred river.
  - It takes place on the banks of the Godavari river in **Nashik**, the Shipra river in **Ujjain,** the Ganges **in Haridwar,** and the confluence of the **Ganges, Yamuna,** and the **mythical** Saraswati river in **Prayagraj**. The confluence is referred to as the **'Sangam'.**

Prayagraj's First Super Speciality Hospital

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh government**, during the ongoing Mahakumbh in Prayagraj, announced several significant initiatives, including the **construction of the city's first super speciality hospital** and the **approval of municipal bonds for infrastructure development** in different districts of UP.

Key Points

- **Major Announcements by the State Government:**
  - **Super Speciality Hospital in Prayagraj:**
    - **Uttar Pradesh Urban Development Minister AK Sharma** announced the construction of a super speciality hospital in Prayagraj at an investment of **₹100 crore.**
    - This will be the city's first such hospital, funded by the **Urban Development Department.**
  - **Municipal Bonds for Development:**
    - The **Cabinet approved** the issuance of **municipal bonds for infrastructure** development in **Prayagraj, Varanasi,** and **Agra.**
    - A fund of **₹50 crore** has been allocated for these districts.
    - Bonds have previously been issued for Lucknow and Ghaziabad, yielding promising results.
  - **New Medical Colleges:**
    - The government announced the establishment of three medical colleges in Hathras, Kasganj, and Baghpat.
  - **Industrial and Educational Development:**
    - The State Government plans to establish 62 Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and five centres of innovation, invention, and training across the state.
  - **Policy Renewal:**
    - The **Uttar Pradesh Aerospace and Defence and employment policy,** which has completed five years, will be renewed with new incentives to attract investment.

Municipal Bonds

- A **municipal bond** is a **debt security** issued by a **state, municipality** or county to finance its capital expenditures, including the **construction of highways, bridges or schools.**
  - Through municipal bonds, a **municipal corporation** raises money from individuals or institutions and promises to pay a specified amount of interest and returns the principal amount on a specific maturity date.

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- These are **mostly exempt from federal taxes** and from most state and local taxes, making them especially attractive to people in high income tax brackets.

AI in Maha Kumbh 2025

Why in News?

Authorities are using CCTV cameras equipped with Artificial Intelligence to **manage the rush of devotees** at the ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela and **predict sudden crowd surges.**

Key Points

- **Crowd Statistics:**
  - Approximately **50 to 60 lakh people visit the fair daily.**
  - The number of devotees surges on ritual bathing days:
    - **Paush Purnima**: 1.6 crore people took a dip.
    - Makar Sankranti **(January 14)**: 3.5 crore people participated.
    - **Mauni Amavasya (January 29)**: An estimated 6 to 7 crore people are expected.
- **Surveillance and Monitoring Setup:**
  - Authorities have installed around **2,700 CCTV cameras across Prayagraj** for the festival with **1,800 located in the fair area.**
  - Monitoring is conducted through four Integrated Command and Control Centres (ICCC) within the fair area.
- **Role of AI in Crowd Management:**
  - Out of 1,800 CCTV cameras, approximately 160 are equipped with AI technology.
  - **AI calculates crowd density per square metre** to estimate the number of people in specific areas at specific times.
  - **Authorities use AI data to estimate the number of pilgrims expected on major bathing days** and divert crowds to **prevent overcrowding.**
- **AI in Emergency Response:**
  - **AI facilitates evacuation in emergencies,** such as the recent fire incident that destroyed 40 huts and 60 tents.
  - This is the first time AI has been used for crowd management on such a large scale globally.
  - **Challenges and Limitations:**
    - AI models sometimes **face gaps due to low network connectivity and technical issues.**
    - Equipping all CCTV cameras with **AI remains cost-prohibitive**.

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

- **About:**
  - AI is the ability of a computer, or a robot **controlled by a computer to do tasks that are usually done by humans** because they require human intelligence and discernment.
    - Although there is **no AI that can perform the wide variety of tasks an ordinary human can do**, some AI can match humans in specific tasks.
- **Characteristics & Components:**
  - The ideal characteristic of artificial intelligence is its **ability to rationalize and take actions** that have the best chance of achieving a specific goal. A subset of AI is Machine Learning (ML).
    - Deep Learning (DL) techniques **enable this automatic learning** through the absorption of huge amounts of unstructured data such as text, images, or video.

Custodial Deaths in Sambhal

Why in News?

Recently, a **man died in police custody** in Sambhal district of Uttar Pradesh, prompting his family and locals to protest, alleging custodial torture**.**

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Key Points

- **About the Incident:**
  - While **police suggested a possible heart attack** as the cause, the victim's **family and locals protested at the outpost**, forcing officials to flee to avoid a **mob attack.**
  - Later, personnel from **the Rapid Action Force (RAF)** restored order by deploying forces in the area.
- **Custodial Torture**
  - **About:**
    - Custodial torture is the **infliction of physical or mental pain or suffering on a person who is in the custody** of the police or other authorities.
    - It is a grave violation of **human rights and dignity** and often leads to **custodial deaths**, which are deaths that occur while a person is in custody.
  - **Types of Custodial Death:**
    - **Death in Police Custody:**
- Death in police custody can result from excessive force, torture, denial of medical care, or other forms of abuse.
    - **Death in Judicial Custody:**
- Death in judicial custody may occur due to overcrowding, poor hygiene, lack of medical facilities, inmate violence, or suicide.
    - Death in the Custody of Army or Paramilitary Forces:
- Can happen through torture, extrajudicial killings, encounters, or crossfire incidents.
  - Challenges in Preventing Custodial Torture in India:
    - Lack of ratification of the **UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (UNCAT)**, which India signed in 1997 but has not yet ratified.
- This prevents India from being bound by international obligations and standards to **prevent and combat custodial torture.**

International Conventions for Human Rights

- **International Human Rights Law, 1948:**
  - The International Human Rights Law contains a provision which **protects people from torture and other enforced disappearances.**
- **United Nation Charter, 1945:**
  - The United Nations Charter calls for **treating prisoners with dignity.** The Charter clearly states that despite being prisoners, their fundamental freedoms and human rights are set out in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights,** the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.
- **The Nelson Mandela Rules, 2015:**
  - The Nelson Mandela Rules were **adopted by the United Nations General Assembly in 2015 to treat prisoners with inherent dignity** and to prohibit torture and other ill-treatment.

Fire Broke Out At Maha Kumbh Mela

Why in News?

A fire broke out at the **Maha Kumbh Mela** in Prayagraj, UP, on **19th January, 2025**, due to a **Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinder blast** leading to the destruction of 18 tents.

- The **45-day Maha Kumbh Mela,** which began on **Paush Purnim on 13th January, 2025,** is one of the **world's largest religious gatherings.**

Key Points

- The fire was **promptly extinguished**, and **no casualties** or **injuries** were reported.
  - The incident occurred near the **Shastri Bridge** in **Zone 19** of the Mela.
- **Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG):**
  - LPG is a **flammable mixture of hydrocarbon gases**, primarily **propane** and **butane**, used as fuel for **heating, cooking**, and even in vehicles.

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- It is stored in **liquid form under pressure** in tanks or cylinders.
- When the pressure is released, **LPG vaporizes** and can be used as a gas.
- It is widely used in households and industries due to its **clean-burning properties** and **high energy content.**

Miyawaki Technique

Why in News?

The Prayagraj Municipal Corporation has **developed dense forests** at multiple locations across Prayagraj to provide pure air and promote a healthy atmosphere.

- Using the **Japanese Miyawaki technique**, the corporation **established several oxygen banks** that have now evolved into lush green forests.

Key Points

- **Benefits of the Project:**
  - The initiative **aids in managing industrial waste** and reduces dust, dirt, and foul odours.
  - It significantly improves the city's air quality and **promotes environmental conservation.**
  - Miyawaki forests help reduce **air and water pollution,** prevent **soil erosion,** and enhance biodiversity.
- **Environmental Impact:**
  - These forests lower the temperature difference between day and night during summers.
  - They enhance biodiversity, improve soil fertility, and create habitats for animals and birds.
  - Large forests developed through this technique **reduce temperatures by 4 to 7 degrees Celsius.**
- **Diversity of Species in Miyawaki Forests:**
  - **Fruit-bearing trees:** **Mango**, Mahua, **Neem**, Peepal, **Tamarind**, Amla, and Ber.
  - **Medicinal and ornamental plants:** Tulsi, Brahmi, **Hibiscus**, Kadamba, Bougainvillea, and Jungle Jalebi.
  - **Other species:** Arjuna, Teak, **Sheesham**, Bamboo, Kaner (red and yellow), Tecoma, Kachnar, **Mahogany**, Lemon, and Drumstick (Sahjan).

The Miyawaki Technique

- **About:**
  - Developed by **Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki in the 1970s**, this method **creates dense forests in limited spaces.**
  - Known as the '**pot plantation method**,' it involves planting native species closely together for rapid growth.
- **Key Features and Benefits:**
  - Plants **grow 10 times faster,** mimicking natural forests with dense plantations.
  - Improves soil quality, biodiversity, and carbon absorption.
  - Effective in urban areas for **transforming polluted and barren lands into green ecosystems.**

AMU Receives Ultimatum for House Tax Dues

Why in News?

Aligarh Municipal Corporation (AMC) issued a notice to **Aligarh Muslim University (AMU),** demanding the clearance of **pending house tax dues** totaling **Rs 24.4 crore** within 15 days.

Key Points

- AMC also warned of legal action under the **Uttar Pradesh Municipal Corporation Act, 1959** if the payment is delayed.
- According to AMC, **the dues pertain to 40 properties** owned by the university.
  - Tax payments for 22 properties had been cleared earlier, leaving **Rs 24.4 crore unpaid** for 18 properties.
- According to AMC's revenue assessment officer, the dues have been outstanding since 2017.
- The AMU had applied for a grant from the UGC to make payment timely.

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- There is a **provision that allows the** University Grant Commission (UGC) to **reimburse such payments,** and the university is in communication with the commission regarding this.

University Grants Commission (UGC)

- It came into existence on **28th December, 1953** and became a **statutory body** by an Act of Parliament in **1956**, for the **coordination, determination and maintenance** of **standards of teaching, examination** and **research** in university education.
  - It also regulates the recognition of **fake universities, autonomous colleges, deemed to be universities,** and **distance education institutions.**
- The **head office** of the **UGC** is located in **New Delhi.**

Makar Sankranti and Amrit Snan (Shahi Snan)

Why in News?

The Mahakumbh Mela 2025, currently underway in **Prayagraj**, witnessed its first **amrit snan or shahi snan** on 14th January, coinciding with the auspicious occasion of Makar Sankranti**.**

- This ritual bath marked the beginning of a series of sacred dips in the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical **Saraswati rivers.**

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Key Points

- **Significance of Makar Sankranti:**
  - Celebrated on 14th January, the festival marks the **Sun's transition into Makar raashi (Capricorn).** This transition, known as **Sankranti,** is particularly special as it signals the **Sun's northward journey,** known as **Uttarayan**.
    - This movement heralds the **end of the harsh winter months** and the **onset of warmer, longer days.**
  - In Hindu mythology, **Uttarayan** is regarded as the **gods' daytime**, signifying an auspicious period for celebrations and spiritual endeavors.
    - **Bhishma Pitamah** of the **Mahabharata** chose to pass away during Uttarayan to attain spiritual liberation.
  - The festival is also significant as it **ends the kharmas, a month-long period during which auspicious events are avoided.**
  - The Sun's entry into Capricorn, the house ruled by Shani (Saturn), who is considered the Sun's son, is celebrated as a familial reunion, a key theme in Hindu traditions.
- **The festivities associated with the day is known by different names in different parts of the country:**
  - **Lohri** by north Indian Hindus and Sikhs.
  - **Sukarat** in central India.
  - **Bhogali Bihu** by Assamese Hindus, and
  - **Pongal** by Tamil Hindu and other South Indian Hindus.
- **Other Significant Dates for Ritual Bathing Include:**
  - **Mauni Amavasya (29 January):** A day of silence and introspection, considered highly auspicious for spiritual purification.
  - **Vasant Panchami (3 February):** Celebrated as a festival of learning and wisdom, marking the arrival of spring.
  - **Maha Shivratri (February 26):** The concluding day of the Kumbh Mela, dedicated to Lord Shiva, symbolizing the union of divine energy.

Uttar Pradesh Explores Privatisation Of Loss-Making Discoms

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh government** has initiated steps toward **privatizing** or **forming** **Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)** for two of its **loss-making electricity distribution companies (discoms).**

- This move has **sparked protests** from employees concerned about **job security** and the potential impacts on service delivery.

Key Points

- The **state's power corporation** recently floated a tender inviting consultants and transaction advisers to devise a **privatization** or **PPP model** for **Dakshinanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd (DVVNL)** and **Purvanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd (PVVNL).**
  - Both discoms have been grappling with **substantial financial losses,** prompting the government to explore alternatives to improve efficiency and service quality.
  - The government has clarified that the specifics of the partnership, including the **shareholding structure,** will be determined based on recommendations from consultants.
  - These experts will analyse the current state of the discoms and propose a suitable model for privatisation or PPP.
  - The model is expected to allow private entities to bring in operational expertise and investment while maintaining some level of government oversight to ensure public accountability.

What is DISCOM?

- **About:**
  - **DISCOM stands** for **Distribution Company** in the power sector. It refers to entities responsible for the **distribution of electricity to consumers**, including **households, businesses,** and **industries**.

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- **Role of DISCOMs:**
  - **Electricity Distribution:** They manage the infrastructure and operations for **delivering electricity** to consumers within their designated areas.
  - **Billing and Revenue Collection:** DISCOMs handle **metering, billing,** and **collecting payments** for electricity consumption.
  - **Maintenance and Upgrades:** They are responsible for maintaining the **distribution network,** including **transformers, substations,** and **power lines.**
  - **Customer Service:** DISCOMs address issues like **power outages, meter installations,** and grievances related to electricity supply.

Mahakumbh Mela 2025: World's Largest Religious Gathering

Why in News?

The **Mahakumbh Mela 2025,** celebrated as the largest human gathering on Earth, commenced with the auspicious **'Shahi Snan' (royal bath)** on the occasion of **Paush Purnima**.

- Held every **144 years** during a **rare celestial alignment,** the event is expected to draw over **1.5 crore (15 million) devotees** to the sacred confluence of the **Ganga, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati** at the **Triveni Sangam in Prayagraj, Uttar Pradesh.**

Key Points

- The **45-day spiritual festival,** which concludes on 26 **February**, will feature several significant bathing rituals, including:
  - **Makar Sankranti:** 14 January
  - **Mauni Amavasya:** 29 January
  - **Basant Panchami:** 3 February
- These events hold immense religious significance, drawing devotees, saints, and pilgrims from across India and the globe.
- **Namami Gange Yagya:**
  - On the eve of the festival, the Namami Gange team organized a grand 'yagya' at the Sangam to pledge continued efforts toward preserving the purity and flow of the **Ganga River**.
  - The event saw participation from over **200 Ganga Sevadoots** and thousands of volunteers, with a special recognition of youth contributions to the **Ganga Swachhata Abhiyan.**
- **Safety and Security Measures:**
  - To ensure the safety of millions of pilgrims, the **Uttar Pradesh Police** and **National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)** teams have been deployed across the Maha Kumbh area.
  - Special water police units are stationed at the Sangam to manage the massive influx of devotees during the ritual baths.
- **Maha Kumbh Mela 2025:**
  - The Maha Kumbh Mela 2025, a sacred pilgrimage, will be held in Prayagraj from 13th January to 26th February 2025.
  - It occurs every 12 years, rotating among four locations i.e., Prayagraj (UP), Haridwar (UK), Nashik (MH), and Ujjain (MP).
  - The word Kumbh refers to a pot or vessel, which, in Hindu mythology, is said to have held the nectar of immortality (amrit).
  - Uttar Pradesh has declared the Maha Kumbh area in Prayagraj as a new district called Maha Kumbh Mela for 4 months i.e., 1st December 2024 to 31st March 2025.

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)

- **About:** NDRF is a specialised force constituted for the purpose of specialized response to natural and man-made disasters in India.
- **Formation and Purpose:** The NDRF was formed in 2006 under the **Disaster Management Act, 2005.** Its primary purpose is to respond quickly and effectively to natural and man-made disasters.

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- **Structure:** The NDRF consists of battalions from the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) including the Border Security Force (BSF), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), and Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).
  - **Each battalion has specialized training and equipment for disaster response**.

UP Enforces 'No Helmet, No Fuel' Rule

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh Transport Department** has proposed a strict **"no helmet, no fuel" policy** across cities in the state in an effort to reduce road accidents and fatalities involving two-wheelers.

- The Chief Minister observed that **road accidents claim approximately 25,000 to 26,000 lives** in the state annually.

Key Points

- The '**No Helmet, No Fuel' policy** is set to be implemented in Noida starting **26th January 2025**.
  - This move aims to enforce helmet usage among **two-wheeler riders** and enhance road safety in the region.
- Fuel stations across the state have been directed to install signage reading, **"No Helmet, No Fuel."**
  - This initiative **had been introduced earlier in Gautam Buddh Nagar district** in **2019** but was only implemented sporadically.
- The Transport Commissioner issued an official letter directing the fuel station operators not to sell fuel to **two-wheeler riders,** who are not wearing helmets, including the pillion.
- The **Uttar Pradesh Transport Department** is also working to ensure widespread awareness of the policy.
  - Fuel station operators must be educated about the relevant provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988 and the **Uttar Pradesh Motor Vehicles Rules, 1998**.
- While some support the initiative as a necessary step to enforce helmet usage and save lives, others argue that the government should also consider **improving road quality** and **overall safety measures** rather than enforcing new laws.

Motor Vehicles Act, 1988

- Replacing the **Motor Vehicles Act, 1939**, this Act came into force on **1st July 1989.**
- The Act provides in detail the **legislative provisions regarding** licensing of drivers/ conductors, registration of motor vehicles, control of motor vehicles through permits, special provisions relating to state transport undertakings, traffic regulation, insurance, liability, offences and penalties, etc.

Mahaprasad Seva in Maha Kumbh

Why in News?

The Adani Group and the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) have partnered to provide meals to devotees attending the Maha Kumbh Mela 2025 **in Prayagraj.**

Key Points

- **Duration and Offering:**
  - **The Mahaprasad Seva** will run throughout the Maha Kumbh Mela, **from 13th January to 26th February 2025.**
  - **Meals will be served to 50 lakh devotees** during the event.
- **Collaboration and Acknowledgment:**
  - **Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani** met **Guru Prasad Swami, Chairman of ISKCON Governing Body Commission (GBC)** to express gratitude for ISKCON's support in the initiative.
- **Meal Preparation and Distribution:**
  - **Meals will be prepared in two kitchens** located in and outside the mela area.
  - The **Mahaprasad will be distributed at 40 designated locations** across the Maha Kumbh area.

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- Around **2,500 volunteers will actively participate** in the distribution of meals.

- **Additional Initiatives:**
  - **Golf carts** have been arranged to assist **differently-abled individuals, elderly devotees, and mothers with children.**
  - Five lakh copies of Geeta Saar will be **distributed among the attendees** as part of the spiritual offerings.

The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON)

- The ISKCON, **founded in 1966**, is commonly **known as the "Hare Krishna movement"**.
- ISKCON has **translated the Shrimad Bhagavad Geeta and other Vedic literature in 89 languages**, playing a stellar role in the **dissemination of Vedic literature** across the world.
- Members of the ISKCON movement view **Bhaktivedanta Swami** as a representative and messenger of **Krishna Chaitanya.**

Green Mahakumbh

Why in News?

On 31st January 2025, **Prayagraj is going to host Green Mahakumbh,** uniting over 1,000 **environmental and water conservation workers** from across the country.

- **Shiksha Sanskriti Utthan Nyas** has organized this unique event as part of the Gyan Mahakumbh, with **Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister acting as its chief patron.**

Key Points

- **National-Level Discussion on Environment:**
  - The discussion will **address issues related to nature, the environment, water, and cleanliness.**
  - Experts will share insights on **balancing the five elements of nature and tackling associated challenges.**
  - The event will **explore methods to raise awareness among Mahakumbh visitors** about environmental protection and cleanliness campaigns.
  - Government agencies, public representatives, and local citizens are working together to ensure the success of the Clean Mahakumbh initiative.

- **Swachhata Rath Yatra:**
  - The Swachhata Rath Yatra was also launched in Prayagraj to **promote cleanliness and raise public awareness,** attracting significant community participation.
  - Objectives:
    - It aims to **present Prayagraj as a symbol of cleanliness** for Mahakumbh devotees and tourists.
    - By maintaining a pristine environment along the Mahakumbh Nagar route, the **initiative ensures a welcoming atmosphere** for millions of expected visitors.

- **Awareness Campaign Through Performances:**
  - Street play artists carrying color-coded dustbins **demonstrated proper waste segregation for wet and dry waste.**
  - **A cleanliness-themed music band** performed alongside the chariot, reinforcing the message of maintaining a clean city.
  - **Safai Mitras (sanitation workers) and Municipal Corporation staff** played a vital role in promoting and implementing cleanliness measures.

Caste Atrocity Complaint in UP

Why in News?

Recently, the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) has acknowledged an atrocity complaint filed against a member of Uttar Pradesh's Transgender Welfare Board.

- The movement for **horizontal reservation for transgender individuals in government jobs and education** is gaining momentum in northern India, inspired by activists in southern States.

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Key Points

- **Horizontal and Vertical Reservations:**
  - Vertical Reservations create a **separate quota category under which all transgender individuals qualify**, regardless of their socio-economic background.
  - **Horizontal Reservations** allocate a **percentage of seats for transgender individuals within each socio-economic category**, addressing the layered discrimination faced by marginalized caste trans people.
  - Trans activists nationwide **advocate for horizontal reservations,** highlighting vertical quotas' failure to address caste-based discrimination within the transgender community.
- **NCSC Action on Complaint:**
  - NCSC issued notices to the Saharanpur district administration and police, based on a **complaint by a Dalit trans woman activist.**
    - She alleged that a **member of Uttar Pradesh's Transgender Welfare Board, harassed activists supporting horizontal reservations.**
    - She submitted a recording where the **member allegedly used casteist and transphobic slurs,** including deliberate misgendering.
  - The **member denied the allegations,** claiming the voice in the recording was not hers and questioning the legality of recording calls.
    - She accused the complainant of **misusing constitutional provisions** and plans to file complaints with the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and NCSC.
- **Debate on Reservation Policy:**
  - The 2014 Supreme Court judgment directed reservations for transgender individuals as "Socially and educationally backward classes (SEBC)," sparking differing interpretations.
    - In Madhya Pradesh, transgender individuals were added to the State OBC list in April 2023.
    - **High Courts**, including Karnataka, Madras, and Calcutta, have ruled in **favor of horizontal reservations.**
- **Diverging Opinions on Reservation:**
  - **One perspective supports vertical reservations**, asserting that discrimination against transgender individuals stems from gender, not caste.
    - It **challenges the idea that transgender individuals retain their caste identity after transitioning,** referencing the 2014 Supreme Court judgment.
  - The opposing view critiques this interpretation as overlooking the caste diversity within the transgender community, emphasizing that horizontal reservations address the layered discrimination faced by **marginalized caste transgender individuals.**
- **Broader Implications:**
  - The Supreme Court refused to clarify **the ambiguity in the 2014 judgment in March 2023.**
  - The debate underscores the need for nuanced policies to ensure equitable representation for transgender individuals across socio-economic categories.

National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSCs)

- **About:**
  - The NCSC is a Constitutional Body established with a view to provide **safeguards against the exploitation of Scheduled Castes** and to promote and protect their social, educational, economic and cultural interests.
- **Composition:**
  - The NCSC comprises **a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson, and three additional Members.**
  - These positions are **filled through the President's appointment,** indicated by a warrant under his hand and seal.
  - Their conditions of service and tenure of office are also determined by the President.

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Sambhal Mosque Case

Why in News?

Recently, **the Allahabad High Court** sought **responses from the Central and State governments**, **the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI),** and local authorities regarding a plea filed by the **Shahi Jama Masjid committee in Sambhal**, challenging a trial court's order.

Key Points

- **Supreme Court's Stay:**
  - The trial court had directed an Advocate Commissioner to **survey the Shahi Jama Masjid** while handling a suit claiming the mosque was built by destroying a temple.
  - In November 2024, **the Supreme Court** stayed the trial court's proceedings and **instructed that the matter should not be heard until** the **petition against the survey order is addressed in the Allahabad High Court.**
  - The Supreme Court also ordered that **no new suits seeking surveys of any place of worship should be entertained until further notice.**
- **Survey and Clashes:**
  - In 2024, the local court ordered a **survey of the Mughal-era mosque** following a petition claiming the **mosque was built in 1526** after demolishing a temple dedicated to Kalki, Lord Vishnu's last incarnation.
  - The eight plaintiffs in the suit demanded the right to access the mosque.
  - **Violence erupted in Sambhal on 24th November 2024 after clashes between police and protesters** against the survey, resulting in five deaths and multiple injuries.

Historical Context of the Jama Masjid

- The Jama Masjid in Sambhal is one of three mosques **constructed during Babur's reign (1526–1530).** The others include the mosque at Panipat and the now-demolished Babri Masjid.
  - **Historian Howard Crane** described the mosque's architectural features in his work, **The Patronage of Babur and the Origins of Mughal Architecture.**
  - Crane noted a **Persian inscription stating that Babur ordered the mosque's construction in December 1526** through his subedar, **Jahangir Quli Khan.**

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

- ASI, under **the Ministry of Culture**, is the premier organisation for the archaeological research and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation.
  - **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958** governs the functioning of ASI.
- It administers more than 3650 ancient monuments, archaeological sites and remains of national importance.
- Its activities include carrying out surveys of antiquarian remains, exploration and excavation of archaeological sites, conservation and maintenance of protected monuments etc.
- It was **founded in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham- the first Director-General of ASI.** Alexander Cunningham is also known as the "Father of Indian Archaeology".

Implementation Of Criminal Laws in UP

Why in News?

Recently, **the Union Home Minister emphasized** the need to implement the **three new criminal laws in Uttar Pradesh**'s seven police commissionerates by 31st March 2025.

- **Seven police commissionerates are** Varanasi, Lucknow, Meerut, Ghaziabad, Gautam Buddh Nagar, Agra, and Kanpur.

Key Points

- **Review Meeting:**
  - The Union Minister **reviewed the implementation of the three new criminal laws** with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister.

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- The review covered the **status of provisions related to police, prisons, courts, prosecution, and forensics** in Uttar Pradesh.

- **Officials Present in the Review:**
  - Senior officials from **the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA)** and Uttar Pradesh government attended the meeting.
  - Key attendees included the Union Home Secretary, Director General of the **Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D)**, and Director General of the **National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB).**
- **Directives and Recommendations:**
  - He instructed the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister to **review progress on the implementation of the new laws** in February 2025.
  - He suggested fortnightly reviews by the Chief Minister and weekly reviews by the **Chief Secretary and Director General of Police (DGP)** involving relevant departments.
  - **Use of Technology and Forensic Resources:**
    - He stressed increasing the use of technology, recommending more than one forensic mobile van per district.
    - Forensic teams should be categorized into serious, common, and very common cases to optimize resource allocation and prioritize critical cases.
  - **Monitoring of Zero FIRs:**
    - He also called for regular monitoring of **Zero FIR transfers** to the respective states, ensuring accountability and efficiency.

Bureau of Police Research and Development

- The Government of India established it **under the Ministry of Home Affairs in 1970**.
- It replaced **the Police Research and Advisory Council (1966)**, with the primary **objective of modernization of the police force**.
- In **1995**, the Government **decided to entrust issues relating to Correctional Administration Work** to the BPR&D.
  - Thereby BPRD has to **ensure the implementation of prison reforms** as well.
- The Government of India decided to create a **National Police Mission** under the administrative control of BPR&D to transform the police forces in the country.
- In **August 2020,** it observed its **50th foundation day**.
- It has been **publishing data on police organisations since 1986.**

Zero FIR

- Zero FIR is an **FIR** that **can be registered by any police station, irrespective of jurisdiction,** when it receives a complaint regarding a **cognisable offence**.
- No regular FIR number is assigned at this stage.
- After receiving the Zero FIR, the revenant police station registers **a fresh FIR and starts the investigation.**
- It is meant to help victims of serious crimes, **especially women and children, to lodge a complaint quickly and conveniently,** without having to go from one police station to another.
- It is also meant to **ensure that the evidence and witnesses are not lost or tampered with due to delays** in filing the complaint.
- It is **transferred to the relevant police station** where the offence has taken place or where the investigation has to be conducted.

National Crime Records Bureau

- NCRB was set up in 1986 to function as a **repository of information on crime and criminals** to assist the investigators in linking the crime to the perpetrators based on the recommendations of the **Tandon Committee, National Police Commission (1977-1981) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) Taskforce (1985)**.
  - It is part of the **MHA and is headquartered in New Delhi.**
- It also acts as a **"national warehouse" for the fingerprint records** of Indian and foreign criminals, and assists in locating interstate criminals through fingerprint search.

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- The NCRB has four divisions: Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS), Crime Statistics, Finger Prints, and Training.
- **NCRB Publications:**
  - Crimes in India, Accidental Deaths and Suicides, Prison Statistics, and Reports on Missing Women and children in India.
  - These publications serve as principal reference points on crime statistics not only for police officers but also for criminologists, researchers, media and policymakers not only in India but abroad as well.

Alarming Rise Of Hypertension in Uttar Pradesh

Why in News?

Recent data from the National Family Health Survey (NFHS)-6 reveals a worrying trend in **Uttar Pradesh**, where **one in every four individuals** is at risk of hypertension.

- This health condition, often referred to as the "silent killer," poses a significant threat due to its potential to cause severe complications such as **strokes** and heart attacks.

Key Points

- The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) has observed that among patients seeking treatment, approximately **25%** are at risk of **hypertension**.
- Alarmingly, many of these individuals are unaware of their condition, increasing their vulnerability to severe health complications such as **brain strokes** and **heart attacks**.
- In response, AIIMS has initiated **comprehensive data collection** on patients and their caregivers to facilitate early detection and management of hypertension.
- The distinction between general blood pressure fluctuations and hypertension.
  - While a **normal blood pressure** reading for young adults is typically around **120/80 mm Hg,** readings of **140/90 mm Hg or higher** are indicative of hypertension.
- Regular monitoring is crucial, as even slight increases can lead to significant health issues.
- To combat this growing health concern, AIIMS is collaborating with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).
- This partnership aims to gather comprehensive data on patients and their families, focusing on the prevalence of blood pressure issues, hypertension, and diabetes.
  - The goal is to identify patterns and risk factors, enabling targeted interventions to prevent and manage hypertension effectively.
- The **NFHS report** serves as a critical reminder of the escalating risk of hypertension in Uttar Pradesh.
  - It underscores the necessity for increased awareness, regular health screenings, and prompt medical attention to mitigate the adverse effects associated with this condition.

Hypertension

- **About:**
  - **Hypertension (high blood pressure)** is when the pressure in your **blood vessels** is too high **(140/90 mmHg or higher).** It is common but can be serious if not treated.
  - **Blood pressure is written as two numbers:**
    - The **first (systolic) number** represents the pressure in blood vessels when the heart contracts or beats.
    - The **second (diastolic) number** represents the pressure in the vessels when the heart rests between beats.
  - **World Hypertension Day** is celebrated on 17th **May every year** to promote awareness about hypertension and encourage people to prevent and control this silent killer.
- **India's Hypertension Burden**
  - India alone has an estimated **188.3 million adults aged 30–79 years** grappling with hypertension.

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- The prevalence of **high blood pressure** in India is slightly lower than the **global average of 31%.**
- To reach a **50%** control rate, India needs to ensure that an additional **67 million people** with hypertension receive effective treatment.
  - If the progress scenario were achieved, **4.6 million deaths** due to high blood pressure would be averted by **2040**.

Task Force for Gomti River Rejuvenation

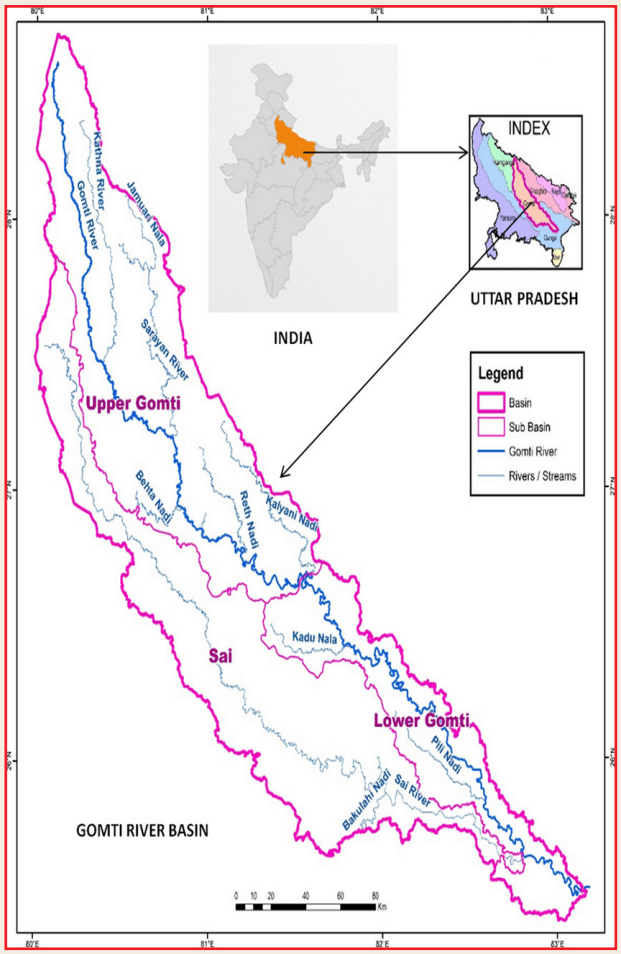
Why in News?

Recently, **the Territorial Army** established a **new task force** dedicated to the **rejuvenation and protection** of **the Gomti River,** named **Ganga Task Force (GTF).**

Key Points

- **About GTF:**
  - **Objective and Focus:**
    - **The GTF** aims to enhance **environmental preservation and sustainable development.**
    - Key responsibilities include **pollution** monitoring, riverbank and ghat patrolling, public awareness campaigns, and riverbank stabilization.
  - **Composition:**
    - The GTF primarily **comprises ex-servicemen**, reflecting the Territorial Army's tradition of utilizing experienced personnel for national missions.
  - **Inauguration:**
    - The **formal raising ceremony** occurred on **1st January 2025 at Lucknow Cantonment.**
  - **National Mission Alignment:**
    - The GTF was **established under** the **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)**, an initiative of the **Ministry of Jal Shakti.**
    - **Orders for its creation** were issued by **the Ministry of Defence in September 2024.**
  - **Significance:**
    - This initiative reinforces the **Indian Army**'s role in nation-building and environmental sustainability.
    - The GTF aims to contribute significantly to the revitalization of the Gomti River and the broader **Clean Ganga Mission.**

Gomti River



- The Gomati River is a **tributary of the Ganga River** in central Uttar Pradesh.
- It **originates east of Pilibhit**, Uttar Pradesh.
- The **Sai River, a right-bank tributary**, joins the Gomati near Jaunpur.
- The **Gomati River merges with the Ganges near Saidpur**, Uttar Pradesh.

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Digital Ticket Booking for Kumbh Mela 2025

Why in News?

Recently, the Railways has introduced jackets with **QR scanners for volunteers to digitize ticket bookings for passengers** ahead of the Kumbh Mela 2025.

Key Points

- **Deployment of Officials:**
  - North Central Railway **officials** from the Prayagraj division **will wear fluorescent green jackets with QR codes** embedded at the back.
    - Devotees can scan the QR code to **access the Unreserved Ticketing System (UTS) mobile app.**
  - The app allows passengers to **book unreserved tickets digitally**, avoiding long queues.
  - Railways will operate over **10,000 regular trains** and more than **3,000 special trains** during the event.
- **Mahakumbh Rail Seva 2025 App:**
  - The **Railways has launched an app and portal** to provide train schedules, guest house information, helpline numbers, and more.
  - 28 guest houses with a capacity of 1.3 lakh devotees will accommodate visitors.
  - A **toll-free number 1800-4199-139** has been active since 1st November, 2024.
    - From 1st January 2025, the **helpline will operate 24x7, with multilingual call operators** proficient in Odia, Tamil, Telugu, Marathi, and Bengali.
  - Railway **announcements will be made in 12 languages**, including Hindi, English, Gujarati, Marathi, Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, Malayalam, Bengali, Odia, Punjabi, and Assamese.

Kumbh Mela

- **About:**
  - It is the largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims on earth, during which participants bathe or take a dip in a sacred river. This gathering takes place at 4 different places, namely:
    - In **Haridwar**, on the banks of **the Ganges.**
    - In **Ujjain**, on the banks of Shipra.
    - In **Nashik**, on the banks of Godavari **(Dakshin Ganga).**
    - In **Prayagraj**, at the confluence of the Ganges, the Yamuna, and the mythical invisible Saraswati.
- **Different Types of Kumbh:**
  - The **Kumbh Mela** is celebrated **4 times over a course of 12 years.**
  - At **Haridwar and Prayagraj**, Ardh-Kumbh Mela is held **every 6th year.**
  - The **Maha Kumbh Mela** is celebrated at Prayag after 144 years (after 12 'Purna Kumbh Melas').
  - **Maagh Kumbh** is celebrated **every year** in the month of **Maagh (Jan-Feb) in Prayagraj.**

NMCG's 59th Executive Committee Meeting

Why in News?

Recently, the **59th Executive Committee (EC) meeting** of the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) approved several critical projects dedicated to the conservation and rejuvenation of the Ganga River.

- These initiatives are aimed at **promoting the cleanliness, sustainable development, and preservation of the environmental and cultural significance of the river.**

Key Points

- **Projects in Uttar Pradesh:**
  - **Chandauli Project:**
    - Construction of a 45 million liters Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) using the hybrid annuity model.
    - Includes supporting infrastructure and ensures **operation and maintenance (O&M) for 15 years.**
  - **Manikpur Project:**
    - Development of a 15 million liters Faecal Sludge Treatment Plant and a 35 kilowatts solar power plant.

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- Designed for eco-friendly waste management and effective operations for 5 years.

- **River Conservation in Bihar:**
  - **Buxar Project:**
    - Construction of a **50 million liters STP** and supporting structure.
    - Incorporates a **nature-based 1 million liters capacity STP**, three interception **pumping stations**, and an 8.68 km sewer network.
    - Ensures robust O&M for 15 years, advancing **sustainable river conservation efforts.**

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)

- **About:**
  - On 12th August 2011, the NMCG was listed **as a society** under the Societies Registration Act, 1860.
  - It acted as the implementation arm of the **National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA)** which was constituted under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act (EPA),1986.
    - **NGRBA** was dissolved in 2016 and **replaced by the National Council for Rejuvenation, Protection, and Management of River Ganga.**
- **Objective:**
  - The objective of the NMCG is to **reduce pollution and ensure the rejuvenation** of the Ganga River.
    - Namami Gange is one of the Coveted Programmes of NMCG to clean Ganga.
  - This can be achieved by promoting intersectoral coordination for comprehensive planning & management and maintaining minimum ecological flow in the river, with the aim of ensuring water quality and environmentally sustainable development.

Digital Transformation Of Mahakumbh

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government is going to use **the Artificial Intelligence (AI)-enabled cameras**, Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) **wristbands** and **mobile app** tracking to track the headcount of pilgrims at the Mahakumbh 2025.

Key Points

- **Overview of Mahakumbh 2025:**
  - The government anticipates a footfall of approximately 450 million devotees during the Mahakumbh, a UNESCO-recognized Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
  - It is the **world's largest peaceful congregation**, where pilgrims take a sacred dip in the river.
- **Digital Transformation of Mahakumbh:**
  - **Digital and AI-Based Initiatives:**
    - Launch of a **dedicated website and app** for event information.
    - **AI-powered chatbot** available **in 11 languages.**
    - **QR code-based passes** for people and vehicles.
    - Multilingual **digital lost-and-found centres** for visitors.
  - **ICT and Monitoring Systems:**
    - **ICT monitoring** for cleanliness and tent accommodations.
    - **Software for land and facility allocation** and multilingual digital signage.
    - Automated ration supply system and drone-based surveillance and disaster management.
    - **Real-time monitoring software** for 530 projects and an inventory tracking system.
    - Integration of all **event locations on** Google Maps.

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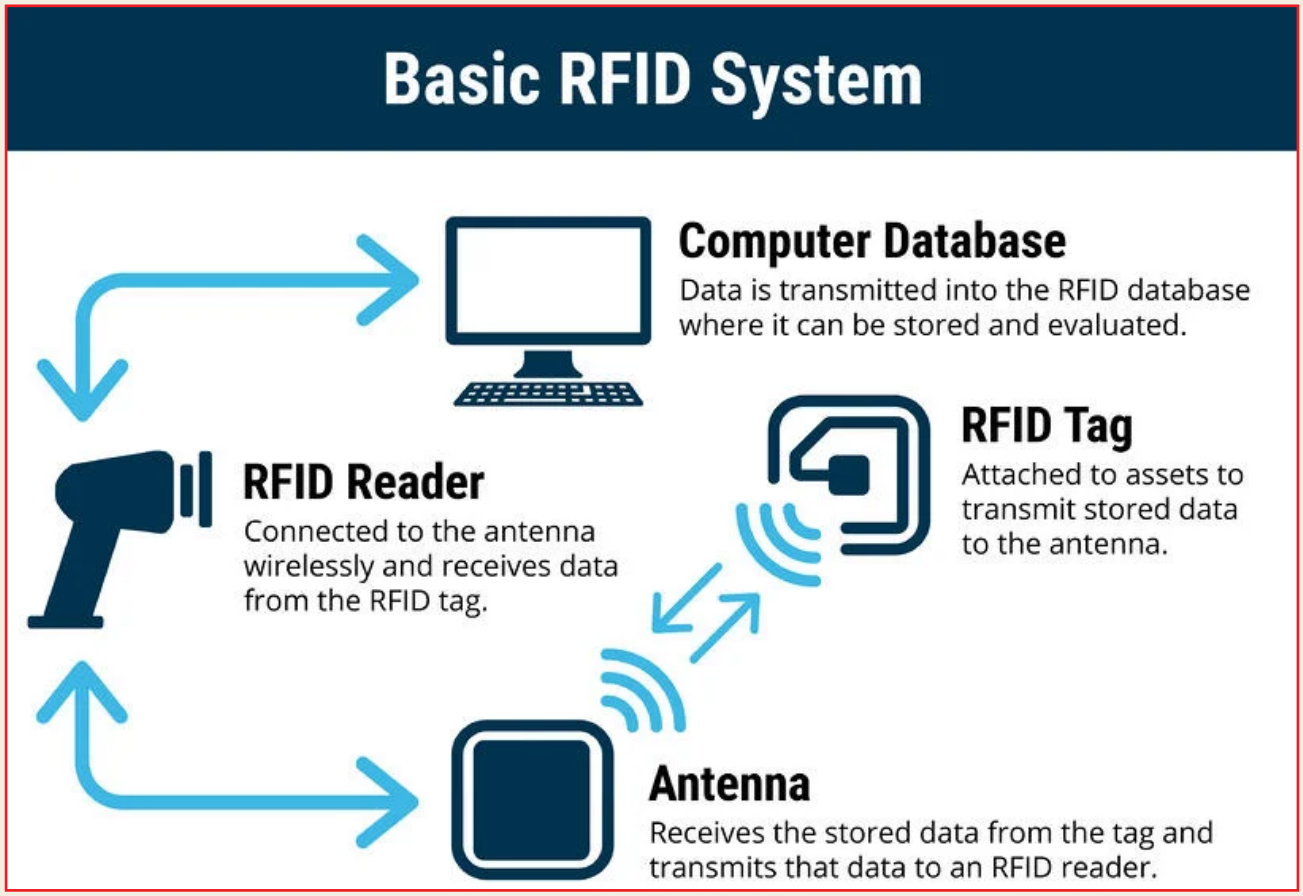
- **Infrastructure and Facilities:**
  - **Ghats for Devotees:**
    - 35 permanent ghats and nine **new ghats constructed** to facilitate bathing.
    - **Aerial flower showers** planned across all 44 ghats, covering a 12-km area.
  - **Enhanced Visitor Experience:**
    - **Multilingual digital signage** and other technological aids to enhance crowd management and convenience.

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)



- 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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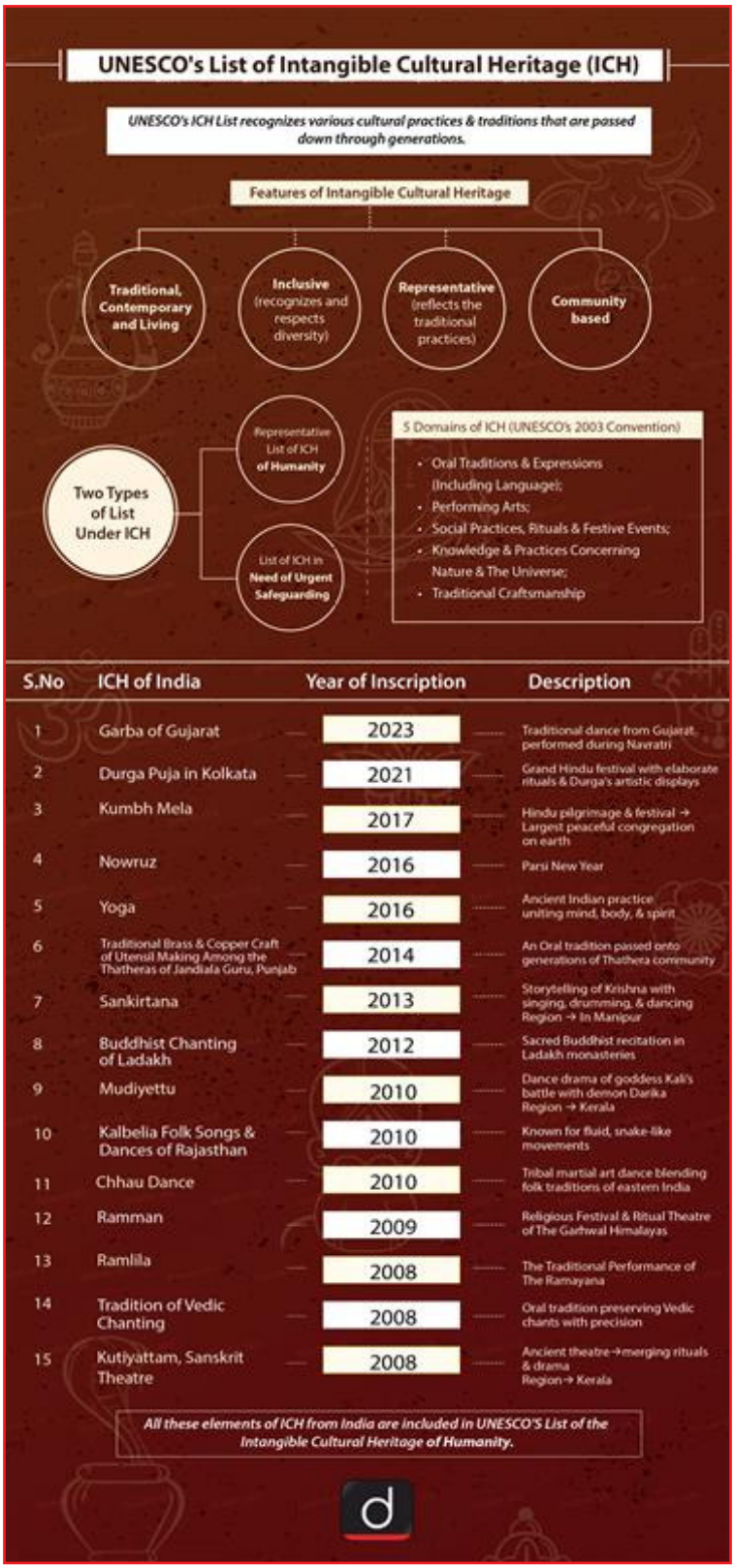

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ASI Response on Sambhal Mosque

Why in News?

Recently, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has requested the civil court in Sambhal for control and management of the **Mughal-era Shahi Jama Masjid in Sambhal**, citing its status as a protected heritage site. The request follows the court's approval of a survey of the mosque.

Key Points

- **Controversy Around the Sambhal Mosque:**
  - On 19th January, 2018, an First Information Report (FIR) was filed against the mosque's management committee for installing steel railings on the mosque's steps without obtaining proper authorization.
  - The ASI stated that the **Shahi Jama Masjid which was notified as a protected monument in 1920**, under the **Ancient Monuments Preservation Act 1904,** falls under its jurisdiction.
  - The ASI argued that the mosque's management committee made unauthorised structural modifications, which are unlawful and should be restricted.
- **Access and Regulation:**
  - The ASI maintained that public access to the mosque is permissible, but only if it adheres to ASI regulations.
  - The ASI has sought full control and management of the mosque, emphasizing its responsibility for maintaining the monument and regulating any changes to its structure.
- **Violence During Court-Ordered Survey:**
  - Violence erupted in Sambhal on 24th November 2024, during a court-ordered survey of the Shahi Jama Masjid.
  - Four people were killed, and several others sustained injuries during the clashes.
- **Judicial Commission:**
  - A three-member judicial commission was formed on 28th November 2024, to investigate the violence.
  - The commission will determine whether the violence was spontaneous or part of a premeditated conspiracy.
  - The inquiry will analyze the events leading to the violence and recommend measures to prevent such incidents in the future.
  - It is required to submit its findings within two months, with any extension subject to government approval.
- **Survey and Temple Petition:**
  - The court-ordered survey was linked to a petition claiming that the **Jama Masjid** in Sambhal **was originally a** Hari Har temple located in mohalla Kot Purvi and was converted into a mosque in 1529.
  - **Historical Context:**
    - The Jama Masjid in Sambhal is one of three mosques **constructed during Babur's reign (1526–1530).** The others include the mosque at Panipat and the now-demolished Babri Masjid.
    - **Historian Howard Crane** described the mosque's architectural features in his work, ***The Patronage of Babur and the Origins of Mughal Architecture.***
    - Crane noted a **Persian inscription stating that Babur ordered the mosque's construction in December 1526** through his subedar, **Jahangir Quli Khan.**

Ancient Monuments Preservation Act, 1904

- **About:**
  - The Act was passed in 1904, during the tenure of **Lord Curzon in British India**.
  - It **aimed at preserving ancient monuments** and objects of historical, archaeological, and artistic significance.
- **Key Provisions:**
  - It empowered the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to protect and restore ancient Indian monuments.
  - Regulated the movement and trade of antiquities to **prevent** illegal trafficking**.**
  - Provided for control over archaeological excavations in specified areas.

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- Facilitated the acquisition of ancient monuments for preservation in certain cases.

- **Significance:**
  - Played a foundational role in protecting India's historical and cultural heritage under a structured legal framework.
  - Enhanced the responsibilities of the ASI in monument conservation.

UP Declares Maha Kumbh Area A New District

Why in News?

Recently, the Uttar Pradesh government has declared the Maha Kumbh **area in Prayagraj** as a **new district.**

- It was made to streamline the management and administration of the upcoming Kumbh Mela scheduled for **January 2025.**

Key Points

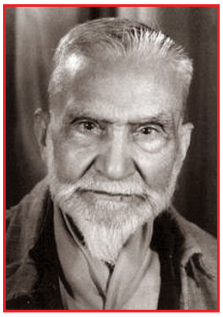
- The notification was issued under Section 2 (th) of the **Uttar Pradesh Prayagraj Mela Authority, Prayagraj Act, 2017**.
  - It officially declares the Mahakumbh Mela District for organizing the Mahakumbh 2025.
  - The **Mela Adhikari** was made the **administrative authority of the new district.**
- **Powers and Responsibilities of Mela Adhikari:**
  - The Mela Adhikari, Kumbh Mela, Prayagraj, will hold powers of the Executive Magistrate, District Magistrate, and Additional District Magistrate under Section-14 (1) and relevant sections of the Indian Civil Defense Code, 2023.
  - The Mela Adhikari will also possess all the powers of the District Magistrate and Collector under the **Uttar Pradesh Revenue Code, 2006 (amended in 2016)**, for handling all cases.
  - The Mela Adhikari has the authority to appoint an Additional Collector for the district.

Maha Kumbh

- Kumbh Mela comes under United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)'s Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
- It is the largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims on earth, during which participants bathe or take a dip in a sacred river.
  - It takes place on the banks of the Godavari river **in Nashik, the** Shipra river **in Ujjain**, the Ganges in Haridwar, and the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati river **in Prayagraj**. The confluence is referred to as the 'Sangam'.
- As it is held in four different cities in India, it involves different social and cultural activities, making this a **culturally diverse festival.**
- The **over month-long fair** is marked by the construction of a massive tented township, complete with cottages, huts, platforms, civic facilities, administrative and security measures.
  - It is organised immaculately by the government, the local authorities and the police.
- The mela is especially **renowned for the presence of an extraordinary array of religious ascetics** enticed from remote hideaways in forests, mountains and caves.

Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh Birth Anniversary

Why in News?



Recently, Vice-President of India Jagdeep Dhankhar paid tributes on the **138th birth anniversary of** Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh (1886-1979), a visionary nationalist.

Key Points

- **Background:**
  - Raja Mahendra Pratap Singh was **born on 1st December 1886, in Hathras, Uttar Pradesh.**

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- He was a **freedom fighter, revolutionary, writer** and **social reformer.**
- He founded **Prem Mahavidyalaya in 1909,** a technical institute at Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh.

Freedom Movement Contributions:

- Mahendra Pratap actively participated in the **1906 Congress session in Kolkata,** supported the **Swadeshi movement**, and supported indigenous industries and local artisans.
- Mahendra Pratap was deeply involved in India's struggle for independence. In **1915, during World War I**, he proclaimed the **first Provisional Government of India** in **Kabul, Afghanistan**, with himself as its president, opposing British colonial rule
  - He sought support from countries like **Germany, Japan, and Russia** for India's fight against British colonial rule.
  - He is said to have met **Vladimir Lenin in 1919**, two years after the **Bolshevik Revolution.**
- He also formed the **Executive Board of India in Japan** in 1940 during the **Second World War**.

Internationalist and Peace Advocate:

- Mahendra Pratap was nominated for the **Nobel Peace Prize in 1932** for his global advocacy for peace and his efforts to expose **British atrocities in India and Afghanistan.**
- In 1929, Mahendra Pratap launched **the World Federation in Berlin**, which later influenced the creation of the **United Nations.**

Political Career:

- After independence, he worked hard to promote the idea of Panchayati Raj and served as a **Member of Parliament** from **Mathura (1957).**

Death:

- He died on **29th April 1979.**

Digital India State Consultation Workshop Organized in UP

Why in News?

The **National e-Governance Division (NeGD)** of the **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)**, in partnership with **Uttar Pradesh Development Systems Corporation Ltd. (UPDESCO)**, organized a **Digital India State Consultation Workshop** in Lucknow.

Key Points

Aim of the Workshop:

- Raising awareness about **Digital India initiatives**.
- Identifying opportunities for state IT projects to leverage Digital India platforms.
- Showcasing successful projects for potential replication.
- Facilitating knowledge sharing, exchange of ideas, and industry partnerships.

Focus Areas:

- The event highlighted the **importance of data and digital infrastructure** and urged the state to enhance connectivity for last-mile digital penetration.
- The workshop's uniqueness in bringing together state officials and e-District Managers to collaboratively work towards **good governance** was emphasised.
- **Discussions centered on national initiatives under the Digital India Programme including:**
  - **Digilocker: DigiLocker** allows **access to digital versions of various documents** including driver's licenses, vehicle registration certificates and academic mark sheets.
  - **Entity Locker:** EntityLocker is a flagship initiative designed to **empower organizations by providing a secure, cloud-based platform** for storing, sharing, and verifying digital documents and certificates.

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- **API Setu:** API Setu addresses the fear/risk of Covid-19 infections and will help the people, businesses and the economy to return to normalcy.
- **OpenForge:** It is Government of India's platform for open collaborative development of e-governance applications. Its objective is to **promote sharing and reuse of e-governance application** source code.
- **myScheme:** It is a National Platform that aims to offer **one-stop search and discovery of the Government schemes**.
- **UMANG:** The UMANG mobile app is an **all-in-one single, unified, secure, multi-channel, multi-lingual, multi-service mobile app.** It provides access to high-impact services of various organizations of the Union and States.
- **UX4G:** It aims to **make digital services user-friendly** by providing personalized, visually appealing, efficient, and accessible interfaces.

- Key topics like Cyber Security and Capacity Building were also addressed.
- State-led discussions featured CM Helpline (1076), Inspector General of Registration and Stamps (IGRS), UIDAI Ecosystem, and Aadhaar Authentication Services.

Open Discussions:

- A collaborative session was held between MeitY and Uttar Pradesh government officials.
- During the session **key challenges and implementation issues in e-Governance projects** were discussed.
- Feedback and suggestions were sought for resolving obstacles and improving project execution.

National e-Governance Division (NeGD)

About:

- The NeGD was **established in 2009 by the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY)** as an Independent Business Division under the **Digital India Corporation.**

Role and Responsibilities:

- NeGD supports MeitY in **managing and implementing e-Governance projects** across the country.
- It **provides technical and advisory assistance** to Central and State Ministries, Departments, and other government organizations.

Key Operational Areas:

- **Programme Management:** Ensures smooth execution of e-Governance projects.
- **Project Development:** Develops initiatives to enhance digital governance.
- **Technology Management:** Oversees technological aspects of e-Governance projects.
- **Capacity Building:** Strengthens skills and capabilities within government organizations.
- **Awareness and Communication:** Promotes e-Governance initiatives under the Digital India Programme.

Preservation Of Cultural Heritage Of Mahabharata Age

Why in News?

Recently, an update is seen on the conservation and development of the **protected site in Hastinapur, Meerut,** which was designated as **one of the five 'Iconic Sites'** by the Union Government in 2021-22, under the management of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

Key Points

History:

- Hastinapur was the **capital of the Pandavas and Kauravas** during the **time of the Mahabharata**.
- The site is associated with many places from the Mahabharata, including **Vidurr Tila, Pandaveshwar Temple, Baradri, Draunadeshwar Temple, Karna Temple, Draupadi Ghat, and Kama Ghat.**

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- **Excavations:**
  - **B. B. Lal**, the Director General of the ASI, **conducted excavations** at Hastinapur **in the early 1950s**.
  - He **found correlations between the Mahabharata and the material remains** he unearthed, which led him to historicize some of the traditions in the epic.
- **Iron objects:**
  - The site has many **iron objects** that date **from the 6th century BCE to the 16th century CE.**
  - The excavated slag samples indicate that the site was involved in **crucible carburization activities.**
    - Crucible carburization is a **process that uses a crucible to heat wrought iron with carbon-rich materials to create steel.**
- **Recent work:**
  - The ASI has **conducted excavations** at the site **in 2021-22 and 2022-23.**
  - The site has also undergone **conservation and development work,** including the **construction of pathways, parking, and gardens.**

Five Iconic Sites

- **Dholavira:**
  - An archaeological site with a water system that was **used for rainwater harvesting.** The people who lived there during the Harappan civilization are known for their water conservation techniques.
- **Hastinapur:**
  - A historical and cultural site in the **Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh**. It was the **capital of the Kuru dynasty** emperors in the Mahabharata.
- **Sivasagar:**
  - A town in **Upper Assam known for its Ahom palaces and monuments**. It was the capital of the **Ahom Kingdom** from 1699 to 1788.
- **Adichanallur:**
  - An archaeological site from south India with a history dating back to 2500 BC–2200 BC. In 2004, **human skeletons of varying ethnicities were unearthed** here.
- **Rakhigarhi:**
  - Rakhigarhi in Haryana's **Hissar district** is one of the **most prominent and largest sites of the Harappan civilisation**. It is one among the five known townships of the Harappan civilisation in the Indian subcontinent.

UP Govt to Revise Madarsa Act, 2004

Why in News?

Recently, the Uttar Pradesh government is set to revise the **Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act, 2004** excluding higher-level education from its purview and restricting its coverage only to institutions offering education up to **Class 12**.

- In an earlier judgment, the **Supreme Court** upheld the constitutional validity of the 2004 Uttar Pradesh Board of Madrasa Education Law and set aside an Allahabad High Court verdict that had quashed it on the grounds **violating the principle of secularism**.

Key Points

- The revision of the Madarsa Act is part of a broader effort to **enhance the quality** and **oversight** of Madarsa education in Uttar Pradesh.
  - The government aims to improve secondary education in Madrasas by combining religious teachings with a standard secular curriculum.
- Impact on Higher-Level Religious Degrees:
  - Under the new amendments, Madrasas will no longer be able to offer higher-level religious degrees like **Kamil** and **Fazil.**
    - These degrees, which have been a part of the madrasa education system, will **lose their recognition under the revised Act**.
  - The focus on secondary education is expected to bring about a more standardized approach to madrasa education, ensuring that s**tudents receive a balanced education** that prepares them for further studies or vocational training.

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Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act, 2004

- The Act aimed to regulate and govern the functioning of madrasas (Islamic educational institutions) in the state of Uttar Pradesh.
- It provided a framework for the **establishment, recognition, curriculum,** and **administration of madrasas** across Uttar Pradesh.
- Under this Act, the **Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education** was established to oversee and supervise the activities of madrasas in the state.

Women Lead Over Half Of Startups in Uttar Pradesh

Why in News?

Over **half of the registered startups in Uttar Pradesh are now led by women,** showcasing the state's progressive business landscape.

Key Points

- According to the **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**, out of more than 13,370 startups in the state, over 6,812, almost 51%, are led by women entrepreneurs.
- The **state's startup policy, initially introduced in 2020 and amended in 2022**, aims to establish 100 incubators across all 75 districts, providing a robust infrastructure for new ventures.
  - The policy also **includes financial incentives and support systems** specifically designed to encourage women entrepreneurs.
- The startups in Uttar Pradesh have **collectively created over 100,000 jobs**, contributing significantly to the state's economy.
- Initiatives like the **single window clearance system, 'Nivesh Mitra'**, have been instrumental in creating a business-friendly environment.
  - It boasts a disposal rate of 97.22%, **earning recognition with an award from the central government**.
- Looking ahead, Uttar Pradesh **plans to develop India's first artificial intelligence city in Lucknow** and establish an exclusive fund to boost the AI ecosystem.
  - These initiatives are expected to further enhance the state's appeal as a hub for tech startups and innovation.

UP Becomes First State to Fully Adopt GeM

Why in News?

Recently, Uttar Pradesh has **become the first state in India to fully integrate its procurement process with the Government e-Marketplace (GeM).**

Key Points

- Uttar Pradesh has **abolished its longstanding tendering system** by fully adopting GeM.
- This integration **mandates** that all service providers, from basic stationery suppliers to those providing **Sport Utility Vehicle (SUVs)** for official use, adhere strictly to central government regulations
- The comprehensive government order issued on 26th November, 2024, annuls over 33 previous **procurement**-related directives.
  - This move ensures full compliance with GeM protocols, reducing the likelihood of errors and misuse, and promoting a standardized procurement process.
- The state government **estimates that this shift to GeM-based procurement could save over Rs. 2,000 crore annually**.
  - This is achieved through competitive pricing and efficient procurement processes.
- The Uttar Pradesh Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board has **already leveraged GeM to procure quality infrastructure materials** for 18 Atal Residential Schools. These materials, including furniture and IT equipment, were delivered swiftly and at competitive prices, ensuring high standards for educational facilities.
  - The full adoption of GeM is expected to enhance the credibility of public procurement procedures in Uttar Pradesh.
- It **aligns with the state's broader goals of fostering a business-friendly environment** and ensuring transparency in government operations.

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- This initiative also supports the state's ambitious economic targets, contributing to its goal of becoming a USD 1 trillion economy.
- Uttar Pradesh's commitment to **transparent procurement has been recognized at national levels**.
  - The state has been awarded for its exemplary performance in various categories, including total order value and highest services procurement.

Government e Marketplace (GeM)

- GeM is a **100% Government owned and National Public Procurement Portal** that facilitates online procurement of common use Goods & Services required by various Government Departments / Organisations / PSUs.
- The initiative was **launched by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in 2016**.
- It provides the tools of e-bidding, reverse e-auction and demand aggregation to facilitate the government users, achieve the best value for their money and **aims to enhance transparency, efficiency and speed in public procurement.**

Dr. Ambedkar's Death Anniversary

Why in News?

Recently, Uttar Pradesh leaders paid tributes to Dalit icon and **India's first Law Minister Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar**, who headed the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution, on his death anniversary.

Key Points

- **About:**
  - **Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar** was a prominent **Indian jurist, economist, social reformer, and politician.**
  - He was born on **April 14, 1891** in **Mhow, Madhya Pradesh.**
    - His father, **Subedar Ramji Maloji Sakpal**, was a well-read person and follower of Sant Kabir.
- **Education:**
  - Ambedkar earned his **Bachelor's degree from Bombay University** and went on for further studies to **Columbia University in New York and London School of Economics.**
- **Contributions:**
  - In **1924**, he started an Association for the welfare of the depressed classes **and in 1927**, he started the Bahishkrit Bharat newspaper to address the cause of the depressed classes.
    - He also led **the Mahad Satyagraha in March 1927.**
  - He participated in all three Round Table Conferences.
  - In 1932, Dr. Ambedkar signed the Poona pact **with Mahatma Gandhi**, which abandoned the idea of separate electorates for the depressed classes **(Communal Award)**.
  - In **1936**, he formed the **Independent Labour Party** to safeguard the interests of the depressed classes.
  - In 1942, Dr. Ambedkar was appointed to the **Executive Council of the Governor General of India as a Labour member** and elected to the Constituent Assembly **from Bengal in 1946.**
    - He was the Chairman of Drafting Committee and remembered as the Father of the Indian Constitution.
  - In 1947, Dr. Ambedkar became **Minister of Law in the first Cabinet of independent India.**
    - **He resigned from the cabinet in 1951**, over differences on the Hindu Code Bill.
- **Additional Details:**
  - Later in life, He **converted to Buddhism.** He passed away on **December 6, 1956, which is commemorated as Mahaparinirvan Diwas.**

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- **Chaitya Bhoomi** is a memorial to B R Ambedkar, located in Mumbai.
- He was also awarded **India's highest civilian honour the Bharat Ratna in 1990.**

Pilibhit Tiger Reserve

Why in News?

Recently, **a probe has been ordered** after a viral video surfaced, showing a fleet of vehicles allegedly belonging to a minister in Uttar Pradesh passing through the **core area** of the **Pilibhit Tiger Reserve**. This raised concerns about the **breach of forest regulations.**

Key Points

- As per forest department regulations, **private vehicles are strictly barred** from entering the core area, allowing **access only to forest department vehicles or those authorized for safari tours.**
- Pilibhit Tiger Reserve:
  - It is located in **Pilibhit and Shahjahanpur district of Uttar Pradesh**.
  - It was notified as a **Tiger Reserve** in 2014.
    - In 2020, it bagged **international award TX2** for doubling up the number of tigers in the past four years.
  - It forms part of **Terai Arc Landscape in the upper Gangetic Plain**.
  - The northern edge of the reserve lies along the Indo-Nepal border while the southern boundary is marked by the river Sharada and Khakra.
  - Flora and Fauna:
    - It is home to a habitat for over 127 animals, 326 bird species and 2,100 flowering plants.
    - Wild animals include **tiger, swamp deer, bengal florican, leopard,** etc.
    - It has high **sal forests**, plantations and grasslands with several water bodies.

Tiger Reserves

- A protected area designated for the **conservation of the striped big cats (tigers)** is referred to as **Tiger Reserve.** However, a tiger reserve may also be a **national park** or **wildlife sanctuary.**
  - **For Example:** The **Sariska Tiger Reserve** is also a national park. It is so because the place was originally created as a **national park and later dedicated to tiger conservation.**
- Tiger Reserves are notified by State Governments as per provisions of **Section 38V of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** on advice of the **National Tiger Conservation Authority.**

TX2 Award

- It goes to one site that has **achieved remarkable and measurable increase in its tiger population since 2010.**

First Validation Flight Landing At Jewar Airport

Why in News?

Recently, the **Noida International Airport (NIA)** achieved a major milestone as its **first validation flight successfully landed**, bringing it closer to operational readiness.

Key Points

- **Successful Landing of Validation Flight:**
  - The validation flight was **operated by IndiGo**.
  - Special acknowledgement was given to the site workers for their critical role in the project's progress.
- **Flight's Objectives:**
  - The flight tested and confirmed the **airport's approach and departure procedures, accuracy of navigational aids, and air traffic control systems.**
- **Ministerial Remarks and Vision:**
  - The Union Civil Aviation Minister commended the team's efforts and emphasized:
    - The airport's potential to **transform air travel and regional connectivity.**
    - Its design reflects **Uttar Pradesh's cultural heritage.**
    - A terminal capacity of 12 million passengers annually at its 2025 opening.

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- With this development, **Uttar Pradesh will have its 17th operational airport.**

- **Sustainability Focus:**
  - The Minister emphasized sustainability through:
    - Solar energy utilization for powering the airport.
    - **Eco-friendly infrastructure development** aligned with government priorities.
- **Economic and Developmental Impact:**
  - The project is expected to **create thousands of jobs.**
  - It is also expected to boost tourism and drive regional development in Western Uttar Pradesh and serve as Asia's largest airport upon completion.

Noida International Airport (NIA)

- The Noida International Airport at Jewar is **developed as the country's first transit hub** with aspirations to develop it into an Asia-Pacific transit hub, **a first for India.**
- It is developed based on the **Zurich Airport model in Switzerland,** with the goal of enhancing passenger and flight handling capabilities to world-class standards.
  - The greenfield **airport is being** constructed in the Jewar area of Gautam Buddh Nagar district in western Uttar Pradesh.
  - It **will be the second international airport in the National Capital Region**, alongside Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport.

UP- First State to Fully Adopt GeM Platform

Why in News?

Recently, Uttar Pradesh has become the first state in India to fully integrate the Government e-Marketplace (GeM) platform, enhancing **transparency and efficiency in public procurement**.

- This move is **projected to save Rs 2,000 crore annually** while fostering fair practices and empowering small businesses.

Key Points

- Prior tendering systems in Uttar Pradesh lacked uniformity and were vulnerable to misuse.
- GeM resolves these issues by enforcing standardized rules, thereby reducing the chances of violations or loopholes.
- The state government aims to scale up GeM usage across all state departments, ensuring compliance and enhancing accountability.
- **Demonstrated Success:**
  - The Uttar Pradesh Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board used GeM to procure materials for 18 Atal Residential Schools.
    - These schools, serving students from Class 6 to intermediate level, now offer exemplary learning environments, including support for children orphaned during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- **Policy Reforms and Compliance:**
  - **Strict guidelines:** Policies prohibit practices such as offline contracts, price discovery bids, quantity-based bids, and unnecessary requests for samples during bid evaluations.
    - All state departments must procure at least 25% of their annual goods and services through GeM, with penalties for non-compliance.
  - **Support for Small Enterprises:** Relaxed tender eligibility criteria (e.g., turnover and past performance) create opportunities for **micro and small enterprises (MSEs).**
  - **Worker Welfare Provisions:** Policies mandate minimum wages, Employee Provident Fund (EPF), and Employee State Insurance (ESI) benefits for outsourced employees.
    - Service providers cannot arbitrarily replace outsourced employees after hiring, ensuring job stability and fairness.
  - **Anti-Collusion Measures:** Collusion or bid manipulation incurs severe penalties, with provisions for reporting cases to the GeM team.

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- **Complaint Redressal Mechanism:** High-level committees, chaired by the Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary, review compliance-related grievances submitted via dedicated emails.

- **Alignment with National Initiatives:**
  - GeM adoption promotes the vision of **"Digital India"** by enhancing transparency and accountability in governance.
  - The platform supports local suppliers and fosters fair competition, aligning with the **"Make in India" initiative.**

Government e-Marketplace (GeM) Platform

- **GeM** facilitates **online procurement of common use Goods & Services** required by various Government Departments / Organisations / PSUs.
  - The initiative was launched in August 2016, by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.
  - The current version of GeM, i.e., **GeM 3.0 was launched on January 26, 2018.**
- It provides the **tools of e-bidding, reverse e-auction and demand aggregation** to facilitate the government users, achieve the best value for their money and aims to **enhance transparency, efficiency and speed in public procurement.**

Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah Dispute

Why in News?

A **Supreme Court** bench headed by Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna is set to hear the case on **Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Idgah dispute in Mathura.**

- It is among the oldest temple-mosque conflicts in India, with **Hindus seeking to reclaim places of worship** they allege were converted into mosques during invasions by Muslim rulers.

Key Points

- **Background of the Dispute:**
  - Mathura, considered the birthplace of Lord Krishna, had a **temple built in 1618**.
  - The Hindu side alleges that the **temple was demolished in 1670 by Mughal ruler Aurangzeb to construct the Shahi Idgah Mosque.**
  - The Hindu side claims the mosque **contains Hindu religious symbols and features**, including a lotus-shaped pillar and an image of the deity Sheshnag.
    - Also contends that the mosque was built on a part of the 13.37-acre land **belonging to the Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi Trust** and has **filed a suit seeking the mosque's relocation.**
  - **The Shahi Idgah Mosque Committee and the UP Sunni Central Waqf Board** argue that the mosque does not stand on disputed land.
- **Key Developments:**
  - **Court-Monitored Survey:**
    - On 14th December 2023, the **Allahabad High Court ordered a court-monitored survey** of the Shahi Idgah Mosque.
    - The court appointed a commissioner to oversee the survey, based on claims that signs of the site's past as a Hindu temple exist on the mosque premises.
  - **Supreme Court Intervention:**
    - The Committee of Management, Trust Shahi Masjid Idgah, filed a petition **challenging the High Court's order for the survey.**
    - On 16th January 2024, the Supreme Court stayed the High Court's order for the survey, citing vagueness in the Hindu side's application.
- **Arguments:**
  - **Hindu Side's Position:**
    - They demanded that the High Court conduct an original trial, similar to the **Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi case.**
    - The Hindu side has urged the Supreme Court to allow the High Court to determine the modalities for the commission survey.

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- **Mosque Committee's Position:**
  - The committee argues that the High Court's order for a survey is invalid as the suit is barred under the Places of Worship Act, 1991 which prevents changes to the character of religious places as of 15th August 1947.
  - The committee has also challenged the High Court's 26th May 2023, order transferring all dispute-related cases from the Mathura court to itself.

UP Presents Supplementary Budget for FY 2024-25

Why in News?

Recently, the **Uttar Pradesh government** presented a **Rs 17,865.72 crore Supplementary Budget for 2024-25 in the State Assembly** accounting for **2.42% of the original Rs 7.36 lakh crore Budget.**

- This second Supplementary Budget brings the state's total Budget size to Rs 7,66,513.36 crore.

Key points

- **Key Allocations:**
  - **Major Department Allocations:**
    - Rs 8,587.27 crore for the Energy Department.
    - Rs 2,438.63 crore for the Finance Department.
    - Rs 1,592.28 crore for the Family Welfare Department.
    - Rs 1,001 crore for the Animal Husbandry Department.
  - **Other Department Grants:**
    - Rs 805 crore for the Public Works Department (PWD).
    - Rs 505 crore for the Information Department.
    - Rs 515 crore for the Primary Education Department.
- **Achievements in Employment:**
  - The **State's unemployment rate reduced** from over 19% (2012–2017) to 2.4% (2024).
  - Over **1,60,000 recruitments were made in the Education Department**, addressing unfilled vacancies.

Removal Of Allahabad High Court Judge

Why in News?

Recently, **fifty-five MPs of the Rajya Sabha** have **submitted a motion, for removing a Allahabad High Court Judge**, Justice Shekhar Kumar Yadav, to **Chairman** of the **Rajya Sabha.**

Key Points

- **Procedure for Removal of Judges:**
  - Under **Articles 124 and 218**, Judges of **the Supreme Court** and **High Courts** can be removed by the President on grounds of **"proved misbehaviour" or "incapacity."**
  - **Removal requires a motion** passed by **both Houses of Parliament** with:
    - A majority of the total membership of the House.
    - A **special majority** of not less than two-thirds of the members present and voting in the same session.
  - The terms "proved misbehaviour" and "incapacity" are not defined in the Constitution.
    - **Misbehaviour** includes **wilful misconduct, corruption, lack of integrity, or moral turpitude,** as interpreted by the Supreme Court.

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- **Incapacity** refers to **physical or mental conditions preventing judicial functions.**

- **Procedure Under the Judges (Inquiry) Act, 1968:**
  - **Notice of Motion:**
    - Requires signatures of **at least 50 Rajya Sabha members or 100 Lok Sabha members.**
    - The Chairman or **Speaker** decides whether to admit the motion after consultation.
  - **Inquiry Committee:**
    - If the motion is admitted, a **three-member committee** is formed, including judges and a distinguished jurist.
    - The committee investigates the charges:
- If the **judge is absolved, the motion is dropped.**
- If **guilty, the committee's report is sent to Parliament for a vote.**
  - Parliamentary Approval:
    - **Both Houses must pass the motion with a special majority** for the **President** to remove the judge.
- **Current Issue:**
  - Justice Yadav made communally charged remarks at an event organized by the **Vishwa Hindu Parishad,** stating the country should be run by the wishes of the majority.
  - The **Reinstatement of Values of Judicial Life (1997)** requires judges to maintain **impartiality** and avoid actions unbecoming of their office.
  - Although the **Judges (Inquiry) Bill, 2006** (not passed) defined misbehaviour to include code violations, it also proposed minor disciplinary measures like warnings or censure for lesser misconduct.
- **Stringent Removal Process:**
  - The process ensures **judicial independence** but often results in no action against judges even when guilty.
  - The **Blackstone's Ratio principle** is better to let the guilty escape than punish the innocent, and applies to judges' removal to uphold independence.

Complete Ban on Firecrackers

Why in News?

Recently, **the Supreme Court** directed the **Haryana and Uttar Pradesh governments** to impose a **complete ban on firecrackers** in **National Capital Region (NCR)** areas until further orders.

Key Points

- **Call for Complete Ban:**
  - The SC directed the governments of Delhi, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan to clarify their stance on imposing a year-round firecracker ban in the National Capital Region (NCR).
  - The court emphasized the **need for the ban to address both air pollution and noise pollution.**
- **Current Status and Measures:**
  - A **complete ban on firecrackers** currently applies only **around Diwali and New Year.**
  - Delhi has enforced a year-round ban on the manufacture, storage, sale, and online delivery of firecrackers.
  - Rajasthan has also imposed a similar ban in areas falling under the NCR.
- **Enforcement of Anti-Pollution Measures:**
  - The **Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) Stage 4** was enforced in Delhi-NCR due to worsening air quality.
    - NCR states were directed to form **teams of officials to ensure strict adherence to GRAP measures.**
  - These teams will function as officers of the Supreme Court, reporting compliance and breaches to the **Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM).**

Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)

- The **GRAP** consists of emergency measures designed to prevent the deterioration of air quality after reaching specific thresholds in **the Delhi-NCR region.**
- The **Ministry of Environment, Forests & Climate Change (MoEF&CC)** notified the GRAP in 2017.
- Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR & Adjoining Areas (CAQM) implements the GRAP.

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Ayodhya Overtakes Taj Mahal As UP's Top Tourist Destination (2024)

Why in News?

Recently, Ayodhya overtook **Agra (Taj Mahal)** to become the **most visited destination** in **Uttar Pradesh** for 2024.

Key Points

- **Ayodhya Becomes Top Destination**
  - **Ayodhya** attracted **135.5 million domestic tourists** and **3,153 international visitors** between January and September 2024.
    - This spike in tourism is mainly driven by the **inauguration of the Ram Temple**, positioning the city as the **epicenter of spiritual tourism** in India.
  - Ayodhya has seen a 70% increase in religious tour bookings, with the Pran Pratishtha ceremony at the Ram Temple drawing large crowds and expected to grow further during its anniversary celebrations in January 2025.
- **Agra (Taj Mahal)**
  - **Agra**, home to the iconic Taj Mahal, recorded **125.1 million visitors** in 2024, with **115.9 million domestic** and **924,000 international tourists**.
    - **Taj Mahal** continues to be a major draw for **international tourists**, with **foreign arrivals** increasing from **2.684 million** in **2022-23** to **27.7 million** in **2023-24**.
    - However, **domestic visitor numbers** to the Taj Mahal have slightly decreased by **193,000**.
- **Tourism Growth in Uttar Pradesh**
  - **Uttar Pradesh** has seen a remarkable surge in tourism in 2024, with **476.1 million tourists** visiting the state from **January to September 2024**.
  - The state's tourism performance in 2024 is on track to surpass the **480 million** tourists recorded in **2023**.
  - Apart from **Ayodhya**, other spiritual destinations in Uttar Pradesh, including **Varanasi** (62 million domestic, 184,000 international), **Mathura** (68 million, 87,229 foreigners), **Prayagraj** (48 million), and **Mirzapur** (11.8 million), have also experienced significant growth in 2024.
  - The Buddhist Circuit **in Kushinagar** saw 1.62 million visitors, including 153,000 international tourists, reflecting Uttar Pradesh's efforts to diversify its tourism beyond Ayodhya's spiritual appeal.

Ancient Stepwell Unearthed in UP

Why in News?

Recently, a stepwell **approximately 125 to 150 years old**, covering an area of 400 square meters, was unearthed during excavation in the **Laxman Ganj area of Chandausi**.

Key Points

- **Excavation Overview:**
  - The excavation follows the **reopening of** the **Bhasma Shankar temple in Sambhal** on 13th December 2024, **after 46 years of closure.**
  - Officials reported discovering the structure during the excavation, **including two damaged idols found in the temple's well.**
    - Locals claim the stepwell was **built during the reign of the maternal grandfather of the king of Bilari.**
- **Architectural Features:**
  - The **well's upper floor is made of bricks,** while the **lower two floors are constructed with marble.**
  - The structure also **includes four rooms and a well.**

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HC Orders to Protect 17th Century Agra Monument

Why in News?

Recently, the **Allahabad** High Court provided interim protection to a **17th-century** heritage site**, the Hammam in Agra**, and instructed the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) and state authorities to **prevent any damage to the monument.**

Key Points

- **Protection of Heritage Site:**
  - A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) was filed seeking protection for the **Hammam of Ali Vardi Khan in Agra,** citing the imminent threat of demolition by "illegal and unauthorized persons."
  - The Hammam, located in Chipitola, Agra, was confirmed by an ASI survey in October 2023 to have been built in 1620 AD.
- **Court Directions for Preservation:**
  - The High Court directed the Commissioner of Police, Agra, the ASI, and the Uttar Pradesh State Archaeology Department to ensure the monument is not damaged.
  - The Commissioner of Police was instructed to deploy sufficient police forces to safeguard the structure.
- Under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958, the ASI and state authorities have a **duty to protect the 400-year-old Hammam.**

Shahi Hammam

- It is a **Mughal-era bathhouse** located in Chipitola, Agra, **constructed by Alivardi Khan in 1620.**
- Once part of a larger inn complex, the hammam served not only as a **bathing facility** but also as a **cultural and social center.**

Cow-Based Natural Farming in UP

Why in News?

Recently, the **Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister** stated that cow-based natural farming **can boost farmers' incomes** by saving Rs 10,000 to Rs 12,000 per acre.

- He highlighted the **substantial collective savings** possible if most farmers in the state adopt this practice.

Key Points

- **Benefits of Cow-Based Farming:**
  - **Reduces agricultural costs** while conserving cattle**.**
  - **Enhances soil, water, and human health** over the long term.
- **Current Dependency on Inputs:**
  - **Seeds:**
    - Uttar Pradesh produces only half of its seed requirement, importing the rest from other states, especially southern India, at high costs.
  - **Fertilisers:**
    - India relies heavily on imports for fertilisers, particularly urea**,** phosphates**, and** potash**.**
    - Urea imports alone cost Rs 2,127 crore in 2023–2024.
- Exporting nations often **hike prices due to India's high demand.**
- **Potential of Cow-Based Natural Farming:**
  - Experts highlight its potential to save foreign currency spent on fertiliser imports.
  - **Uttar Pradesh** has 2.78 crore farmers and approximately 2 crore cattle, **providing a strong foundation** for cow-based farming.
    - A single cow's dung and urine can support farming on nearly four acres of land.
- **Government Initiatives:**
  - **Self-Sustaining Shelters:** Cow shelters **are** being developed as **training hubs** for cow-based natural farming.

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- **Dedicated Universities:** Plans to establish natural farming **universities** to integrate traditional methods with modern technology.
- **Financial Assistance:** Farmers receive **financial support over three years**, Rs 4,800 in the first year, Rs 4,000 in the second, and Rs 3,600 in the third.
  - Grants are also available for cattle sheds and biogas plants**.**
- **Product Marketing:** Dedicated **outlets have been established** at divisional headquarters to **promote natural farming products.**
  - The government is prioritizing **product certification to enhance consumer trust and market credibility.**

Rising Demand for Organic Products:

- **Post-Covid**, there is **greater demand for** organic, regionally sourced products.
- Research institutions highlight a growing preference for healthier food options with regional flavors.

Natural Farming

- It is a method of agriculture that seeks to **create a balanced and self-sustaining ecosystem** in which crops can grow without the use of synthetic chemicals or genetically modified organisms.
  - Instead of relying on artificial inputs like synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, natural farmers rely on techniques **like crop rotation, intercropping, and composting** to enhance soil health and support crop growth.
- Natural farming methods are **often based on traditional knowledge and practices and may be adapted to local conditions** and resources.
  - The goal of natural farming is to **produce healthy, nutritious food** in a way that is sustainable and environmentally friendly.

Drone Show in Mahakumbh 2025

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government plans to organize a **drone show** during the Mahakumbh 2025, **depicting mythological tales** associated with the Mahakumbh and Prayagraj.

Key Points

Highlights of the Drone Show:

- A fleet of 2,000 illuminated drones will narrate the **legendary tales of 'Prayag Mahatmyam' and the Mahakumbh.**
- Iconic events like the **mythical Samudra Manthan (ocean churning)** and the **emergence of the Amrit Kalash (nectar pot)** will be visually recreated.

Objective:

- The show aims to **highlight the religious and spiritual significance of Prayagraj**, providing a unique experience for pilgrims and locals.

Preparations for Mahakumbh:

- The Mahakumbh, held every twelve years, is **scheduled from 13th January to 26th February 2025.**
- The state government is **focusing on developing and beautifying temples**, Ganga ghats, parks, roads, and flyovers in Prayagraj.
- The **Chief Minister has conducted multiple visits to Prayagraj** to oversee the progress of the preparations.

Kumbh Mela

- It is the largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims on earth, during which participants bathe or take a dip in a sacred river. This gathering takes place at 4 different places, namely:
  - In **Haridwar,** on the banks of **the Ganges**.
  - In **Ujjain**, on the banks of **Shipra.**
  - In **Nashik,** on the banks of **Godavari (Dakshin Ganga).**
  - In **Prayagraj**, at the confluence of the Ganges, the Yamuna, and the mythical invisible **Saraswati.**

Different Types of Kumbh:

- The **Kumbh Mela** is celebrated **4 times over a course of 12 years.**
- At **Haridwar and Prayagraj**, **Ardh-Kumbh Mela** is held **every 6th year.**

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- The **Maha Kumbh Mela** is celebrated at Prayag after 144 years (after 12 'Purna Kumbh Melas').
- **Maagh Kumbh** is celebrated **every year** in the month of **Maagh (Jan-Feb) in Prayagraj.**

NIA to Probe Human-Trafficking Syndicate

Why in News?

Recently, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) carried out searches across 22 locations in six states as part of an investigation into a **human-trafficking syndicate** that entices youth to work in call centers involved in **cyber fraud.**

Key Points

- The searches were conducted in Bihar, **Uttar Pradesh,** Delhi, and other regions.
  - It originates from a police report filed in Gopalganj, Bihar which involves an **organized syndicate that lures and traffics Indian youth to foreign countries** under the pretense of providing jobs.
- Trafficked individuals were **coerced into working in fake call centers.** These call centers were involved in conducting cyber fraud operations.
- Human Trafficking:
  - It refers to the **illegal trade and exploitation of people**, typically for the purposes of forced labour, sexual exploitation, or involuntary servitude.
  - It involves the **recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring, or receipt of individuals** through **threat, force, coercion, abduction, fraud, or deception** for the purpose of exploiting them.

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

State-Of-the-Art Cruise At Mahakumbh's Grandeur

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government is preparing for **Mahakumbh 2025**, adding a new attraction, the **Nishadraj cruise**.

Key Points

- **Launch of Nishadraj Cruise:**
  - The Nishadraj cruise, managed by the **Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)**, has begun its **journey from Varanasi to Prayagraj.**
  - The **cruise is equipped with modern amenities**, reflecting the state's commitment to innovation and excellence.
  - There is ongoing **coordination between the Prayagraj Mela Authority** and the **Varanasi administration** for the cruise's journey.
- **Inauguration:**
  - The **Prime Minister is scheduled to visit Mahakumbh on 13th December 2024**.
  - At **Shrungverpur Dham**, the PM will **unveil statues of Lord Ram** and Nishadraj before boarding the Nishadraj cruise for a journey from Arail to **the Sangam**.

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- Upon reaching the Sangam, he will perform a ritual bath and pay homage to the sacred Ganga River.
  - The itinerary includes a Ganga Aarti, visits to the Bade Hanuman Temple and Akshayavat, and interactions with prominent saints and spiritual leaders at the Parade Ground.

Inland Waterways Authority of India

- The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) is a **statutory body** under the **Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) Act, 1985.**
- It was established in **1986** under **the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways** for development and regulation of inland waterways for shipping and navigation.
- It is **headquartered in Noida, Uttar Pradesh** and its main function is to build necessary infrastructure in inland waterways, surveying economic feasibility of new projects and also carrying out administration and regulation.
- As per the **National Waterways Act, 2016, 111 waterways** have been declared as National Waterways.

Uttar Pradesh Focuses on Gems & Jewellery Growth

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government, is taking substantial steps to enhance the **gems and jewellery sector**, focusing on **economic value addition** and **export growth**.

Key Points

- Uttar Pradesh, with its **rich** cultural heritage and **skilled craftsmanship**, is a significant player in India's gems and jewellery sector.
  - The state's annual trade in this industry is estimated at over **Rs 1 trillion,** involving more than one million **traders, retailers, craftsmen,** and **designers**.
- **Major Hubs:**
  - The hubs for **gems and jewellery trade** in Uttar Pradesh include **Meerut, Lucknow, NOIDA Export Processing Zone**, **Moradabad, Kanpur,** and **Agra**.
  - These centers are pivotal in both manufacturing and exports, contributing significantly to the state's economy.
  - The organized segment of the trade accounts for about **35%** of the overall market, highlighting the importance of structured growth and development.
- **Government Initiatives & Significance:**
  - The CM of Uttar Pradesh has drafted a comprehensive blueprint to **develop Meerut as a major jewellery manufacturing and trading hub** for North India.
  - **Meerut's jewellery industry**, with an annual turnover of over **Rs 2,000 crore,** employs approximately **40,000 goldsmiths, gemstone makers,** and **jewellery traders**.
  - The proposed hub, spanning **32,000 square meters,** aims to position Meerut as a **key center for gems, precious stones, and gold jewellery**.
  - To support this vision, the government plans to construct a **modern multi-storey flatted factory complex** to foster business growth and encourage startups in the sector.
- **National and Global Significance:**
  - The gems and jewellery sector in Uttar Pradesh is not only vital for the state but also contributes **10-12% of India's total merchandise exports**.
  - In 2023, the domestic market for gems and jewellery was valued at **USD 92 billion**, underscoring its importance in the national economy.
  - Uttar Pradesh's thriving wholesale jewellery market serves clients from other states, further solidifying its role as a key player in the industry.

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UP Government Boosts Police & Forensic Capacity

Why in News?

On Constitution Day **(26th November)**, Chief Minister of UP highlighted the state's commitment to transparent police recruitment and establishing forensic labs at the **zonal level** during the **National Conference on Forensic Science and Cybersecurity.**

- These initiatives are part of broader efforts to enhance law and order, ensuring timely justice for victims and maintaining good governance.

Key Points

- **Highlights of the Conference:**
  - **New Criminal Laws:**
    - India has recently implemented **three new criminal laws**: Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam, 2023.
    - These laws, effective from 1st July 2024, aim to protect citizens by ensuring that no one is declared guilty without proper evidence.
  - **Challenges and Reforms in Law and Order:**
    - Before 2017, Uttar Pradesh faced significant challenges in maintaining **law and order**, with a high prevalence of hooliganism (vandalism/violence).
    - The Uttar Pradesh Government has observed that over half of the positions within the Uttar Pradesh Police were unfilled during previous government. Addressing this situation has become a key focus for the current government.
  - **Transparent Recruitment and Forensic Labs**:
    - The state government has recruited over **154,000 police personnel** transparently and recently initiated the recruitment of an additional **7,200 policemen**.
    - Earlier, **forensic labs** were limited to four locations. Now, high-quality forensic labs have been established at the **zonal level**, with plans to expand them to the **range level**.
    - These labs are crucial for gathering evidence in criminal cases and ensuring justice.
  - **Cybersecurity and Forensic Science Initiatives:**
    - Today, **1,775 police stations** in Uttar Pradesh are equipped with **cyber helplines**, enhancing the state's ability to tackle cybercrime**.**
    - Additionally, the **Uttar Pradesh State Institute of Forensic Sciences** has been established to further support **forensic investigations** and improve the **quality of evidence** presented in court.

Constitution Day

- The **Constitution Day**, also known as **National Law Day or Samvidhan Diwas**, is celebrated in India on **26th November** every year to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India.
  - On **29th August, 1947**, the **Constituent Assembly** set up a **Drafting Committee** under the **Chairmanship of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar** to prepare a **Draft Constitution for India.**
  - On 26th November 1949, the Constituent Assembly of India adopted the Constitution of India, which came into effect on **26th January 1950.**
- The **Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment** on **19th November, 2015**, notified the decision of the **Government of India** to celebrate **26 November** as **'Constitution Day'.**
- The day is observed to spread the importance of the constitution and the thoughts and ideas of B. R. Ambedkar, the chief architect of the constitution.

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Farmers Protest Over Land Acquisition Policies

Why in News?

Farmers from across Western Uttar Pradesh protested outside the Greater Noida Authority office **to voice their unresolved land acquisition grievances**.

Key Points

- **Leadership and Demands of the Protest:**
  - The protest was led by the **Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU)** and supported by All **India Kisan Sabha**, and **Bharatiya Kisan Parishad.**
  - They **demand for fair compensation**, including 10% developed land and 64.7% enhanced compensation for acquired land.
  - Greater Noida Authority officials confirmed that the farmers' demands have already been presented to the Uttar Pradesh government.
- **Protest Participation and Actions:**
  - Farmers from around **20 districts,** including **Gautam Budh Nagar**, Bulandshahr, Aligarh, and Agra, joined the protest, which **started with a tractor rally on the Noida-Greater Noida Expressway,** causing minor traffic disruptions.
  - The protest followed several months of smaller demonstrations outside the Greater Noida Authority Office, which farmers felt had resulted in no meaningful outcomes.
- **Future Agitation Plans:**
  - Farmers announced plans to shift their agitation to the **Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA)** from 28th November to 1st December 2024, followed by a march to Delhi starting on 2nd December 2024.
- **Compensation and Development Allegations:**
  - Farmers allege that despite giving up their agricultural land for the development of Noida, Greater Noida, and the Yamuna Expressway, they have not received their rightful compensation or developed plots.

Irrigation Department Project Of UP

Why in News?

Recently, the **Irrigation Department of Uttar Pradesh** has initiated the process regarding the **four-laning (widening) the road** along the **Agra Canal**.

Key Points

- **Project Overview:**
  - **Objective:** The Uttar Pradesh Irrigation Department aims to widen the road along the Agra Canal into a four-lane stretch, facilitating smoother traffic flow.
  - **Proposal:** A **memorandum of understanding (MOU)** with the **Faridabad Metropolitan Development Authority (FMDA)** has been submitted to formalize the project, estimated to cost Rs 278 crore.
- **Status and Challenges:**
  - Despite government approval, progress has stalled due to land ownership formalities.
  - Formal permission from the UP Irrigation Department is required as the department owns the land.
  - A Detailed Project Report (DPR) has been prepared, and the FMDA's approval is pending for signing the MOU to initiate tenders.
- **Benefits:**
  - Enhanced **access to Greater Faridabad, Noida, Delhi, Ballabhgarh,** and the upcoming Greenfield Expressway to **Jewar Airport.**
  - The widened road will ease congestion on the existing two-lane stretch.
- **Significance:**
  - This project **addresses long-standing demands for better infrastructure**, promising **enhanced regional connectivity and economic growth.**

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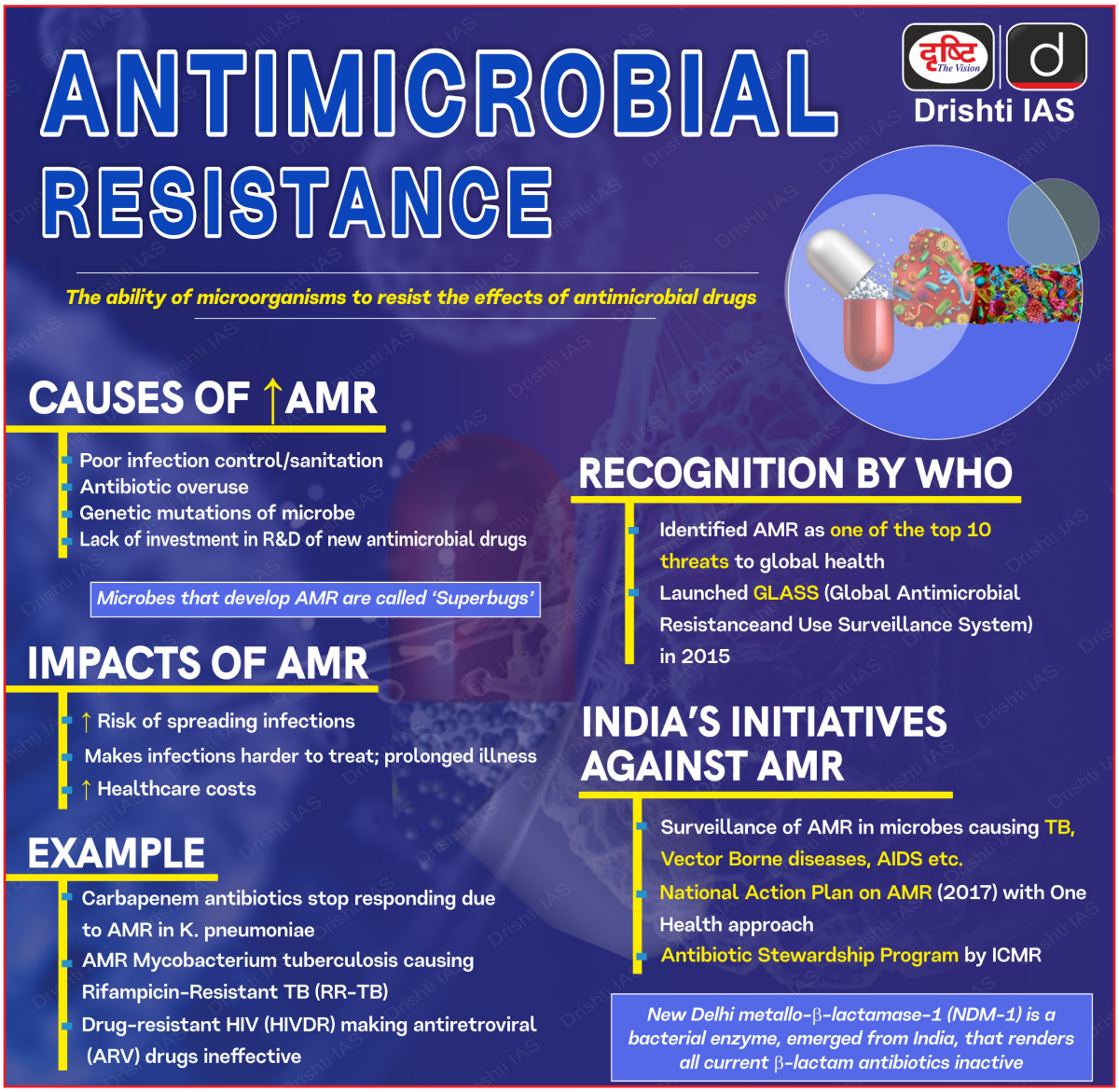
World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW)

Why in News?

On the occasion of the World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW), Banaras Hindu University organised an awareness programme.

- The aim is to **educate patients and MBBS students about** the correct use and **importance of antimicrobial drugs.**



Key Points

- **Overview of WAAW:**
  - World Antimicrobial Awareness Week (WAAW) is **observed annually from 18th to 24th November** to **raise awareness about antimicrobial resistance.**

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- AMR occurs when **microorganisms like bacteria, viruses, parasites, or fungi evolve and become resistant to antimicrobial medicines,** making infections harder to treat and increasing the risks of disease spread, severe illness, and death.
- Experts stressed that antimicrobial resistance **contributes to approximately 300,000 deaths annually** and clarified that not every fever is typhoid or requires antibiotics.

Interactive Activities:

- Students used a street play to effectively convey the message of AMR awareness to the audience.
- **Proper handwashing techniques were demonstrated** emphasizing the role of infection prevention in combating AMR.

Significance:

- The initiative marked a **crucial step in raising awareness and educating the public about the dangers of antibiotic resistance** and promoting sustainable practices to address the issue.

Survey on Jama Masjid in Uttar Pradesh

Why in News?

Recently, the Court ordered a survey on the **16th century Mughal era Jama Masjid** in **Sambhal** district of Uttar Pradesh. The order is followed by a petition filed by a senior advocate.

Key Points

Claims on Historical Conversion:

- The petition alleges that the **Jama Masjid** in Sambhal was **originally a Hari Har temple located in mohalla Kot Purvi** and was **converted into a mosque in 1529.**
- It asserts that the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is** responsible for managing and controlling the disputed site.

Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind:

- Jamiat Ulama-i-Hind, highlighted the importance of **the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act 1991**, which preserves the **religious character of all places of worship** as they **existed on August 15, 1947.**
- They expressed concerns over the disregard for this legislation in recent judicial actions and emphasized **the Supreme Court's** endorsement of the Act in the **Ayodhya verdict.**

Historical Context of the Jama Masjid:

- The Jama Masjid in Sambhal is one of three mosques **constructed during Babur's reign (1526–1530)**. The others include the mosque at Panipat and the now-demolished Babri Masjid.
  - **Historian Howard Crane** described the mosque's architectural features in his work, **The Patronage of Babur and the Origins of Mughal Architecture.**
  - Crane noted a **Persian inscription stating that Babur ordered the mosque's construction in December 1526** through his subedar, **Jahangir Quli Khan**.

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

- ASI, under the **Ministry of Culture**, is the premier organisation for the archaeological research and protection of the cultural heritage of the nation.
  - **Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958** governs the functioning of ASI.
- It administers more than 3650 ancient monuments, archaeological sites and remains of national importance.
- Its activities include carrying out surveys of antiquarian remains, exploration and excavation of archaeological sites, conservation and maintenance of protected monuments etc.
- It was founded in **1861 by Alexander Cunningham- the first Director-General of ASI.** Alexander Cunningham is also known as the "Father of Indian Archaeology".

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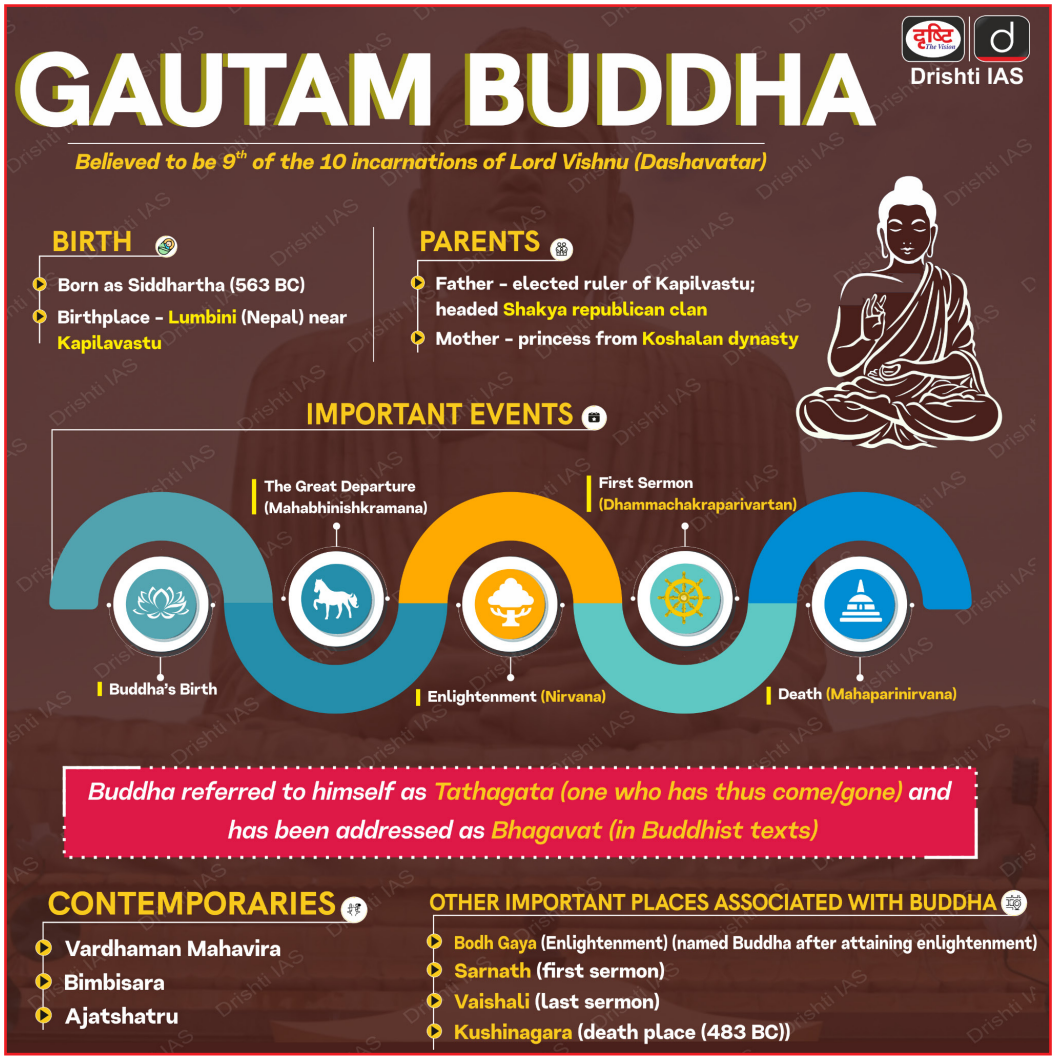
Excavation to Uncover Buddha's Relics

Why in News?

Recently, the Union Minister of State for Finance inaugurated an **archaeological excavation at Ramgram in Maharajganj district** of Uttar Pradesh.

- The project, spearheaded by **the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI),** seeks to **uncover evidence of Lord Buddha's eighth relic**, which is believed to be buried at the site.



Key Points

- **Historical and Spiritual Significance:**
  - The site is **among the eight places where Lord Buddha's relics were enshrined,** holding immense importance in **Buddhist traditions.**
  - It is situated within the **Sohgibarwa Wildlife Division** and is **historically associated with the ancient Kolia kingdom.**

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- Kolia was an **ancient** Indo-Aryan clan of north-eastern South Asia whose existence is attested during the Iron Age.

- **Potential for Regional Development:**
  - The excavation is expected to transform the location into a prominent **Buddhist pilgrimage site.**
  - This development is anticipated to **boost tourism and stimulate economic growth** in the region.
- **Focus on Global Recognition:**
  - The project aims to integrate the site into the global Buddhist pilgrimage circuit.
  - Local authorities foresee **increased visits from international pilgrims and scholars**, enhancing the region's cultural profile.

Sohagi Barwa Wildlife Sanctuary

- **About:**
  - It is situated in the **Maharajganj district of Uttar Pradesh.**
  - In the **north, the Sanctuary shares the international boundary with Nepal**, and in the **east shares the border with Bihar's** Valmiki Tiger Reserve.
  - It was **declared a Wildlife Sanctuary in June 1987.**
- **Drainage:**
  - It is drained by the great Gandak, the little Gandak, Pyas and Rohin rivers.
- **Flora:**
  - Nearly 75% of the area consists of Sal forest, and other humid areas are covered with **Jaamun, Gutal, Semal, KhairTrees, etc.**
  - The lower region of the sanctuary, which is water logged during rains, consists of **Grasslands and patches of Cane forests.**
- **Fauna:**
  - It is inhabited by a variety of animals which mainly includes Leopard, Tiger, **Jungle Cat, Small Indian Civet, Langur, Deer, Blue Bull, Wild boar, Porcupine etc.**

27th IEEE WPMC 2024

Why in News?

Recently, India hosted the **27th IEEE International Symposium on Wireless Personal Multimedia Communications (WPMC) 2024** in **Greater Noida.**

- Indian officials highlighted the country's rapid strides in telecommunication innovation, and **transitioning from** 5G **deployment to** envisioning the future of 6G technology.

Key Points

- **Objective and Theme:**
  - It **provides a platform** for researchers, industry leaders, and policymakers to **discuss advancements in wireless communications.**
  - The **theme, "Secure 6G – AI Nexus: Where Technology Meets Humanity,"** focuses on the **intersection of 6G** and Artificial Intelligence (AI).
- Venue:
  - The event was **hosted at Sharda University** and has brought together experts and thought leaders from various countries.
- **India's Role in Wireless Communication:**
  - An expert highlighted **India's growing innovation ecosystem** and its potential to **contribute significantly to the global telecommunications sector.**
  - India is expected to file approximately **10 patents related to 6G technology** soon, further enhancing its economic and technological stature.
- **Vision for 6G Technology:**
  - The government envisions achieving unprecedented **speeds of up to 1 terabit per second with ultra-low latency**, marking a transformative step in global connectivity and socio-economic development.
  - This initiative aligns with national goals to position India as a global leader in the telecommunications sector.

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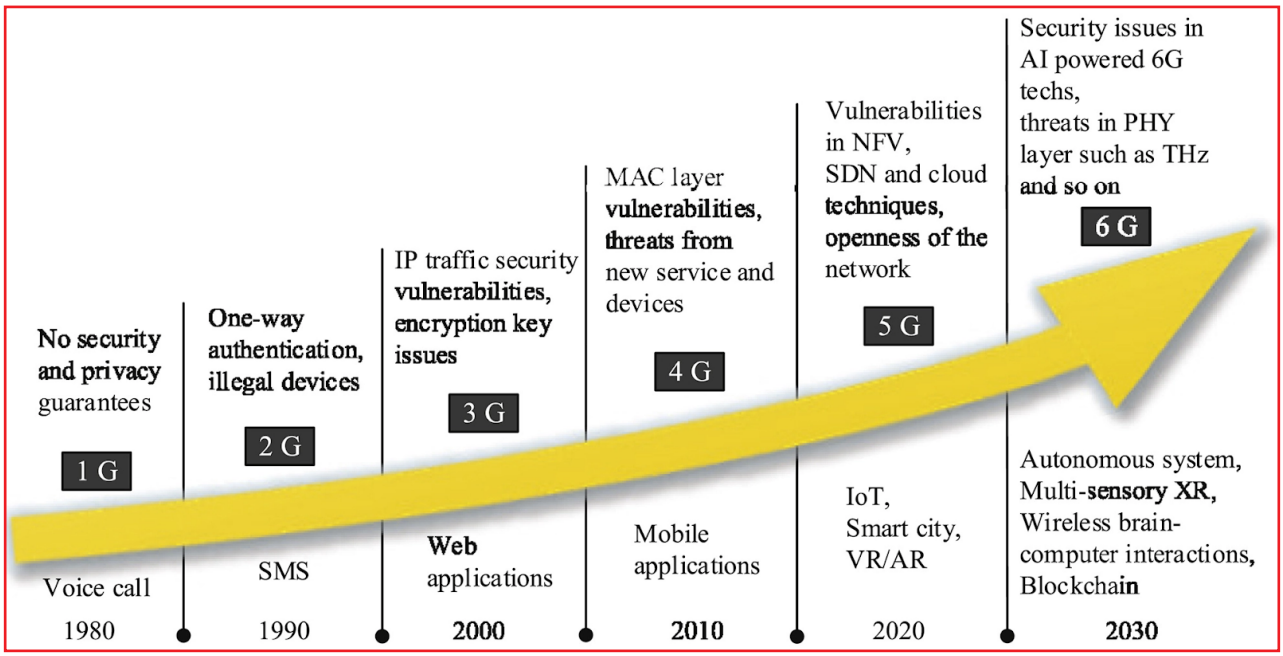
- **Transformative Potential of 6G:**
  - Experts emphasized the potential of 6G to enable portable devices with **advanced capabilities, focusing on high-frequency utilization and minimal latency.**
  - The technology is expected to **revolutionize rural ecosystems** by facilitating remote healthcare, education, and agriculture, aligning with **India's mission to bridge the digital divide and promote inclusive growth.**

India's initiative for providing safer and better telecom services:

- Telecommunication Act, 2023
- Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023
- National Cyber Security Strategy
- Bharat 6G Alliance
- BharatNet Project



Cybersecurity Workshop in Uttar Pradesh

Why in News?

Recently, the National e-Governance Division (NeGD) of Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) in collaboration with the Government of Uttar Pradesh, organised a two-day Cybersecurity **Workshop** in Lucknow.

Key Points

- **Cybersecurity Training Program by NeGD:**
  - NeGD's Cybersecurity Training Program, part of the **State Capacity Building Scheme**, is designed to strengthen cybersecurity resilience among state government officials.

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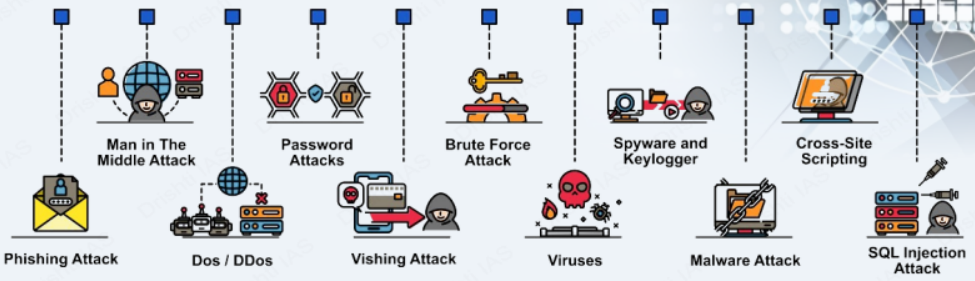
CYBER SECURITY

Cybersecurity refers to any technology, measure, or practice for preventing cyberattacks or mitigating their impact.

CYBER SECURITY ATTACKS



'Crime in India' Report 2022 (NCRB) highlighted 24.4% surge in cybercrimes in India since 2021.

Common Cybersecurity Myths

- Strong passwords alone are adequate protection
- Major cybersecurity risks are well-known
- All cyberattack vectors are contained
- Cybercriminals don't attack small businesses

Cyber Warfare

- Digital attacks to disrupt vital computer systems, to inflict damage, death, and destruction.

CYBER THREAT ACTORS

CYBER THREAT ACTOR	MOTIVATION
NATION-STATES	GEOPOLITICAL
CYBERCRIMINALS	PROFIT
HACKTIVISTS	IDEOLOGICAL
TERRORIST GROUPS	IDEOLOGICAL VIOLENCE
THRILL-SEEKERS	SATISFACTION
INSIDER THREATS	DISCONTENT

Types of Cybersecurity

- Critical infrastructure security (Robust access controls)
- Network security (Deploying firewalls)
- Application security (Code reviews)
- Cloud Security (Tokenization)
- Information security (Data masking)

Recent Major Cyber Attacks

- WannaCry Ransomware Attack (2017)
- Cambridge Analytica Data Breach (2018)
- Financial data of 9M+ cardholders, including SBI, leaked (2022)

Regulations & Initiatives

- **International:**
  - UN Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Advancing Responsible State Behaviour in Cyberspace
  - NATO's Cooperative Cyber Defense Centre of Excellence (CCDCOE)
  - Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, 2001 **(India not a signatory)**
- **India:**
  - IT Act, 2000 (Sections 43, 66, 66B, 66C, 66D)
  - National Cyber Security Policy, 2013
  - National Cyber Security Strategy 2020
  - Cyber Surakshit Bharat Initiative
  - Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)
  - Computer Emergency Response Team-India (CERT-In)

Steps Needed for Cyber Security

- Network Security
- Malware Protection
- Incident Management
- User Education and Awareness
- Secure Configuration
- Managing User Privileges
- Information Risk Management Regime

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- The program equips **Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs)** and Deputy CISOs with critical skills to handle and mitigate cyber risks effectively.
  - The NeGD was **established in 2009** by the **Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology** as an Independent Business Division under the Digital India Corporation.
  - Its aim was to **facilitate and catalyze the implementation of the Digital India Program** across Ministries and State Governments.
- **Objective:**
  - **Cybersecurity Awareness:** Increase understanding of cybersecurity issues, cyber threats, and e-governance frameworks.
  - **Cyber Resilience and Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Enhance participants' knowledge of the **Cyber Resilience Ecosystem** and the role of AI in cybersecurity.
  - **Cyber Suraksha Kendra:** Educate on the importance of Cyber Suraksha Kendra for protecting state-level **e-governance** systems.
  - **Data and Application Security:** Provide insights into data protection **(Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023)** application security, and endpoint security.
  - **Crisis Management:** Train participants in developing Cyber Crisis Management Plans (CCMP) for effective incident response.
  - **Identity and Access Management:** Address challenges in identity and access management to secure government digital systems.

State Capacity-Building Scheme:

- NeGD, under MeitY, has **launched a series of capacity-building workshops** for state leaders, CISOs, and officials across the nation.
- These workshops provide **practical training and best practices for managing cyber threats**, adopting secure IT frameworks, and strengthening digital governance.

Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023

- It aims to **protect the digital personal data of individuals in India** and regulate the collection, storage, processing, and sharing of such data.
- **Key features:**
- Establishes a **Data Protection Board of India** to enforce compliance.
- Requires **explicit consent** for data collection and processing.
- **Mandates data fiduciaries** to implement reasonable security safeguards.

Trees Cut Down for Proposed Kanwar Yatra Route

Why in News?

According to the National Green Tribunal (NGT), authorities have cut around 17,600 trees in Uttar Pradesh's **Ghaziabad, Meerut, and Muzaffarnagar districts** to make way for a new Kanwar Yatra route.

Key Points

Background:

- Earlier this year, the NGT took suo motu cognizance of a news report regarding the Uttar Pradesh government's plan to cut down 1,12,722 trees.
- The purpose of this large-scale tree-cutting was to facilitate a proposed **Kanwar Yatra route between Muradnagar in Ghaziabad and Purkaji in Muzaffarnagar.**

Findings of the Interim Report:

- In August 2024, the NGT **established a joint panel to examine the environmental concerns** associated with this project.
- The report, **based on data from the Irrigation Department,** highlighted that initial permission allowed for felling 1,12,722 trees, but the target was later reduced to 33,776 trees.

The NGT instructed the Uttar Pradesh government to clarify if the calculation of trees to be cut follows the U.P. Protection of Trees Act, 1976.

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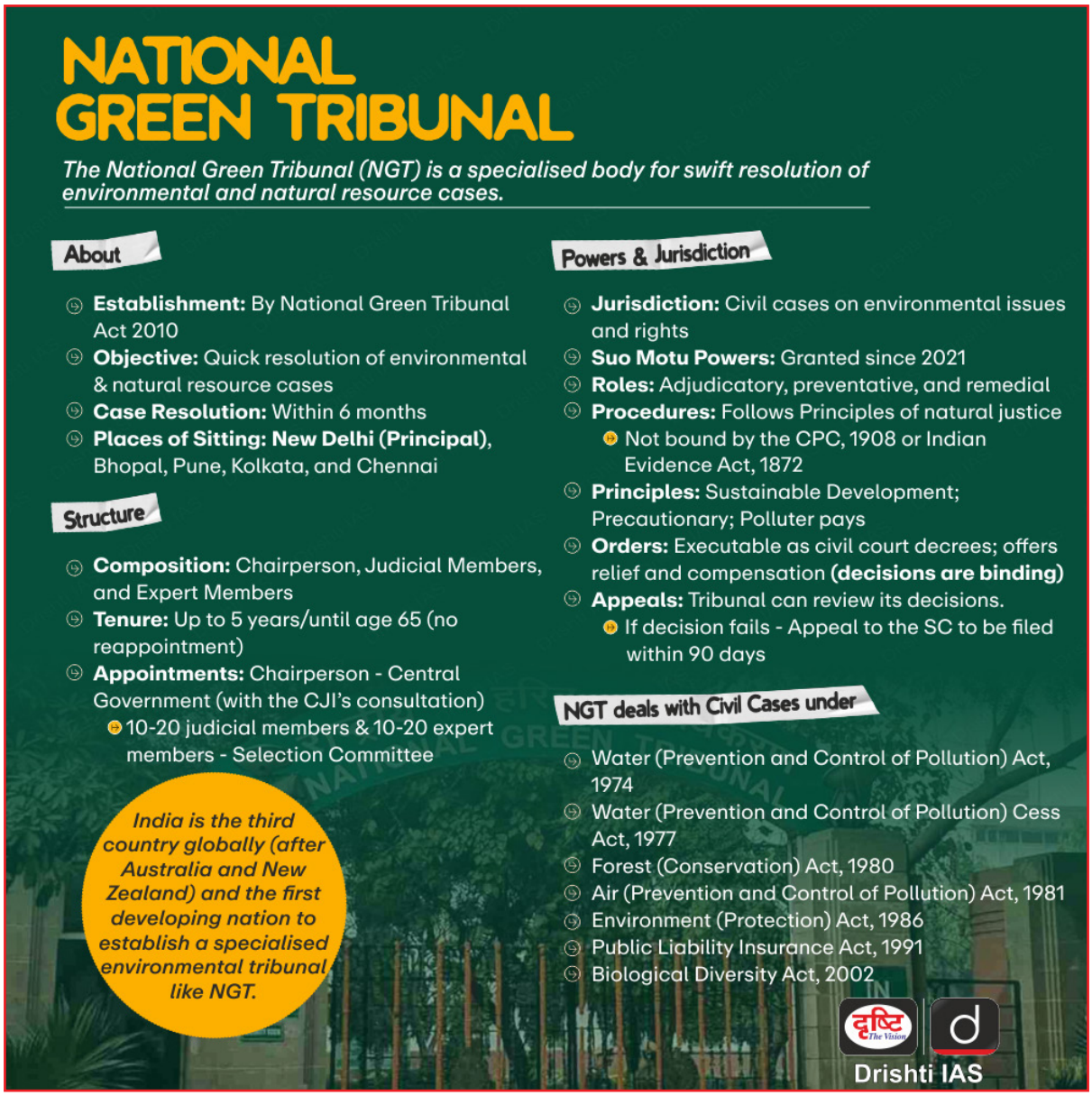

- The government must also specify if **additional vegetation such as plants and bushes**, which may be removed for road construction, **fall under the Act's definition of trees.**

The Kanwar Yatra

- It is a **Hindu pilgrimage** in the **month of Shravana**, by **Lord Shiva devotees**.
- The devotees **travel to pilgrimage** places like **Haridwar**, **Gaumukh, Gangotri** in Uttarakhand, **Sultanganj** in Bihar, **Prayagraj, Ayodhya, and Varanasi** in Uttar Pradesh, and return by carrying **Ganga** water in kanwars to seek the blessings of Shiva.
  - The water is offered to Shiva temples, including the **12 Jyotirlingas** across India and other shrines like the Pura Mahadev Mandir and Augharnath in Uttar Pradesh, the famous **Kashi Vishwanath temple**, and the **Baba Baidyanath Temple** in Deoghar, Jharkhand. The ritual is known as **Jal Abhishek.**

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Full Motion Simulator Facility Inaugurated in Agra

Why in News?

Recently, the **Indian Air Force (IAF)** **C-295 Full Motion Simulator (FMS)** was inaugurated in **Air Force Station Agra**, Uttar Pradesh. It will allow a significant proportion of **pilot training to be undertaken in the simulator,** thereby saving precious flying hours on the aircraft.

Key Points

- The simulator **offers pilots near-realistic training, replicating missions** such as tactical airlift, para-dropping, para-trooping, medical evacuation, and disaster relief.
  - It also **simulates critical scenarios, enhancing pilots' readiness for real-world operations** and improving their ability to make rapid, high-stakes decisions, which boosts the overall safety of military flights.
- The introduction of the **C-295 aircraft** into the IAF **strengthens the country's aerospace industry**, as it marks the beginning of **"Atmanirbhar Bharat"** in private-sector transport aircraft production.
- **C-295 Aircraft:**
  - It is a **transport aircraft of 5-10 tonne capacity** with contemporary technology.
  - Robust and reliable, it is a **versatile and efficient tactical transport aircraft** which can perform a number of different missions.
  - Features:
    - The aircraft, with a flight endurance of up to 11 hours, **can carry out multi-role operations under all weather conditions.**
    - It can routinely operate day as well as night combat missions from desert to maritime environments.
    - It has a **rear ramp door for quick reaction and para dropping of troops** and cargo. Short take-off/land from semi-prepared surfaces is another of its features.
  - **Replacement:**
    - It will **replace the** Indian Air Force's **ageing fleet of Avro-748 planes.**
- The Avro-748 planes are a **British-origin twin-engine turboprop, military transport and freighter** with a 6-tonne freight capacity.

Ganga's Water Quality Deteriorating

Why in News?

Recently, The **National Green Tribunal (NGT)** has observed that the water quality in **the Ganga** in Uttar Pradesh is deteriorating because of the **discharge of sewage or sullage into the river.**

Key Points

- **NGT's Concerns:**
  - The NGT reviewed the sewage treatment situation in Uttar Pradesh, finding a 128 million litres per day (MLD) gap in sewage treatment in Prayagraj district.
    - The **Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)** report revealed that 25 untapped drains in Prayagraj discharge untreated sewage into the Ganga, while 15 others discharge into the **Yamuna.**
    - Out of 326 drains in Uttar Pradesh, 247 are untapped and discharge wastewater into the Ganga and its tributaries.
- **NGT's Directives:**
  - The NGT ordered the Uttar Pradesh chief secretary to submit an affidavit detailing each drain's sewage, connected **sewage treatment plants (STPs)**, and timelines for making STPs functional.

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- The affidavit should also include **short-term measures to prevent untreated sewage discharge.**

- **Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) Issues:**
  - The CPCB report indicated that six out of 41 STPs in 16 Ganga-front towns are non-operational, and only one of the 35 functional plants complies with regulations.
  - The water quality at 41 locations showed faecal coliform levels exceeding safe limits (500/100 ml), with 17 locations exceeding 2,500 MPN/100 ml, indicating severe pollution from untreated sewage.

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)

- It is a statutory organisation, was **constituted in 1974** under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.
- CPCB was also entrusted with the powers and functions under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.
- It serves as a field formation and also provides technical services to the Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate change of the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

Minority Status to Aligarh Muslim University

Why in News?

Recently, The Supreme Court ruled on the **minority status of** Aligarh Muslim University (AMU). The case stemmed from petitions seeking to restore AMU's minority status, which was struck down by the Allahabad High Court in 2006.

Key Points

- The **Court overruled the 1967 Constitution Bench decision**, which had stated that AMU could not be considered a minority institution as it was established by a statute and was a central university.
- **Key Observations:**
  - The court held that an institution created by a minority community qualifies as a minority educational institution, regardless of how it is legally constituted.
  - The purpose of such institutions is to **preserve the community's cultural fabric**.
  - Minority status does not depend on the institution being solely for the community, but predominantly benefiting it.
  - The Court found that the loss of administrative control by the community does not strip the institution of its minority character.
- **Article 30(1) Significance:**
  - Article 30(1) grants minorities the **right to establish and manage educational institutions** to preserve their educational and cultural values.
    - The right to administer does not require community members to manage the institution but ensures its autonomy to maintain community-specific educational goals.
- **The AMU Case:**
  - AMU, established in 1875, was granted minority status by Parliament through the **AMU (Amendment) Act, 1981** but this provision was **invalidated by the Allahabad High Court in 2006.**
- **Government's Argument:**
  - The Centre argued that AMU, as an institution of national importance, **cannot be considered a minority institution** due to its national character.
  - The government contended that **AMU is not limited to any particular religion or community.**
- **University's Stand:**
  - AMU maintained that it was **originally established by the Muslim community** to provide education and empowerment to its members.

New Rules for Appointing Police Chief

Why in News?

Recently, **The Uttar Pradesh government** has framed **new rules for appointing** the state's Director General of Police (DGP).

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Key Points

- **Uttar Pradesh's New Rules on DGP Appointment are:**
  - The UP Cabinet approved the **Director General of Police, Uttar Pradesh Selection and Appointment Rules, 2024.**

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- DGPs will be selected by a committee **considering the officer's service record, experience, and remaining tenure.**
- Only officers with at **least six months of service left before retirement are eligible** for the post.
- Appointed DGPs will serve a **minimum of two years.**
- The selection committee includes a retired High Court judge, UP Chief Secretary, Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) representative, and others.

Existing Practice:

- The state government must send a **list of eligible senior officers to the UPSC** three months before the incumbent DGP's retirement.
- The UPSC reviews the list and **sends a shortlist of three candidates** to the state for the final appointment.
- Only officers with a **minimum remaining tenure (before retirement) of six months** from the date of creation of the vacancy would be eligible for the appointment as DGP. Once appointed, the DGP would have a **minimum tenure of two years**.

Reason for New Rules:

- The rules were introduced in response to a **contempt notice from the SC following multiple petitions challenging the appointment** of temporary DGPs.
- The petitions argue that temporary appointments violate SC directives meant to insulate the police from political influence.
- Although 17 states have enacted their own Police Acts, UP had not done so until now.

SC Upholds Uttar Pradesh Madrasa Education Board Act, 2004

Why in News?

Recently, the Supreme Court partially upheld the constitutional validity of the Uttar Pradesh Madrasa Education Board Act, 2004, affirming that the state has the **authority to regulate madrasa education** to maintain standards of excellence.

Key Points

Supreme Court's Judgment:

- The Court declared that **provisions concerning higher education**, specifically at the **Fazil (undergraduate)** and **Kamil (postgraduate) levels,** were **unconstitutional.**
  - These provisions conflicted with the University Grants Commission Act, 1956 falling under the Centre's exclusive jurisdiction as per Entry 66 of the Union List in the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution.
- The judgment stated that the **Act was consistent with the state's duty to ensure that students** in recognised madrasas **acquire a minimum level of competency**. This ensures they can participate effectively in society and earn a living.
- The Court emphasized that while **minorities have the right under** Article 30 of the Constitution to **establish and manage their educational institutions**, this **right is not absolute.**
  - The state has a legitimate interest in maintaining educational standards in minority institutions and can impose regulatory conditions for aid and recognition.
- The Court interpreted **'education' in Entry 25 of the** Concurrent List broadly, stating that while madrasas impart religious education, their **primary purpose is educational, bringing them within the ambit of this entry.**
  - The Madrasa Board conducts exams and issues certificates to students, further aligning with the educational framework.
- The Supreme Court set aside the Allahabad High Court's ruling, which had stated that the 2004 Act violated Article 21A (Right to Education) and the secularism principle of the Constitution.

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- The Court clarified that Article 21A should be interpreted alongside the **rights of religious and linguistic minorities** to establish educational institutions.
- Referring to **Article 28(3)** of the Constitution, the Court added that students attending a State-recognised minority institution **should not be compelled to take part in religious instruction or worship**, ensuring their **right to freedom of religion.**

Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act, 2004

- The Act aimed to regulate and govern the functioning of **madrasas (Islamic educational institutions)** in the state of Uttar Pradesh.
  - It provided a framework for the establishment, recognition, curriculum, and administration of madrasas across Uttar Pradesh.
  - Under this Act, the **Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education** was established to oversee and supervise the activities of madrasas in the state.

Uttar Pradesh Expands Sanskrit Scholarship Scheme

Why in News?

Recently, the Uttar Pradesh government launched a new scholarship scheme to support **Sanskrit education**, enhancing eligibility and funding for students.

Key Points

- **Expansion**:
  - The scheme now supports **69,195 students with a budget of Rs. 586 lakh**, a significant increase from the previous 300 beneficiaries.
  - Unlike the prior scheme, which had strict age limits, the new scholarship is open to all qualified Sanskrit students across Uttar Pradesh.
  - CM emphasized **Sanskrit's relevance** to scientific fields such as computer science, encouraging students to view it as a language with broad applications.
- **Support for Traditional Gurukul Education**:
  - Plans to revive **gurukul-style schools** were announced, with improved support for residential facilities and hiring of qualified teachers.
  - Establishment of a Vedic science center will facilitate research, integrating traditional Sanskrit knowledge with modern scientific inquiry.

Gurukul

- The 'Gurukul' was a type of education system in ancient India with shishya (students) living with the guru in the same house.
- Nalanda has the oldest university system of education in the world.
- Students from across the world were attracted to Indian knowledge systems.

Ayodhya Deepotsav 2024

Why in News?

Recently, preparations for the 8th **Deepotsav in Ayodhya** have intensified under **Chief Minister's** guidance to make this year's event the grandest one.

Key Points

- A total of **18 tableaux** depicting pivotal moments in **Lord Ram's life** will be displayed, symbolizing **Ayodhya's deep cultural heritage.**
  - Key events such as his **marriage, exile**, and **victory over Ravana** will be represented.
- The **Information Department** is creating 11 tableaux, while the **Tourism Department** is crafting seven, focusing on the seven chapters of the **Ram Charit Manas**, such as **Bal Kand and Lanka Kand.**
- Ayodhya will be illuminated extensively, with diverse lighting enhancing the city's festive spirit.

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Ramlila (North India)

- Ramlila, literally "Rama"s play" is a performance of Ramayana epic in a series of scenes that include song, narration, recital and dialogue.
- It recalls the battle between Rama and Ravana and consists of a series of dialogues between gods, sages and the faithful.
- It is performed across northern India during the festival of Dussehra.
- The most representative Ramlilas are those of Ayodhya, Ramnagar and Benares, Vrindavan, Almora, Sattna and Madhubani.
- This staging of the Ramayana is based on the Ramcharitmanas which was composed by Tulsidas in the 16th century AD.

Green Ayodhya Fund Initiative

Why in News?

Recently, Ayodhya introduced the Green Ayodhya Fund to drive sustainable urban development and environmental conservation.

Key Points

- **Objective:**
  - The fund aims to promote eco-friendly initiatives, sustainable urban planning, and conservation efforts to create a greener Ayodhya.
    - It supports projects on waste management, renewable energy, urban greenery, and pollution reduction, aligning with environmental goals for sustainable urban landscapes.
- **Public Involvement:**
  - The fund encourages community participation and donations to support initiatives, fostering a sense of shared responsibility in environmental conservation.

Ram Temple

- **Traditional Architecture and Construction:**
  - This is a 3-storey temple, built in the traditional Nagara style, standing tall with pink sandstone from Mirzapur and the hills of Bansi-Paharpur (Rajasthan).
  - Temple covers an expansive 71 acres, showcasing the architectural marvel.
- **Temple Dimensions:**
  - Spanning 250 feet in width and 161 feet in height, the main temple area covers 2.67 acres, boasting 390 pillars, 46 doorways, and 5 mandaps.
- **Unique Features Inside:**
  - The main Garbh Griha holds the idols of Ram Lalla, accompanied by multiple mandaps, including Rang Mandap & Nritya Mandap.
- **Innovative Anointment Tradition:**
  - On every Ram Navami at noon, a system of mirrors and lenses will focus the sun's rays on Ram Lalla's idol. This unique anointment requires no electricity, utilizing brass instead of iron or steel.
- **Sculptor's Contribution:**
  - The idol of five-year-old Ram Lalla, crafted by Mysuru sculptor Arun Yogiraj, stands at 51 inches and was consecrated in a special ceremony.
- Durability and Symbolism:
  - No iron has been used in the temple's construction, designed to endure for at least a millennium.

Uttar Pradesh's Path to Economic Leadership

Why in News?

Recently, the Chief Minister highlighted Uttar Pradesh's rapid growth towards becoming India's top economy, driven by infrastructural, industrial, and agricultural advancements.

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Key Points

- **GSDP Growth**: UP's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) is expected to surpass Rs. 32 trillion by FY25, up from Rs.26 trillion in FY24.
  - The government's crackdown on crime and land mafias has helped in reclaiming **64,000 hectares** of land to create space for businesses.
  - The government highlighted **Rs. 40 trillion FDI proposals** and 15 million job opportunities.
- **Focus on Traditional Sectors**: Support for industries like Moradabad's brass, Firozabad's glass, and Bhadohi's carpets.
- **Ease of Doing Business**: UP ranked **2nd** in EODB, transitioning from **14th** place in 2017.
  - UP's annual budget increased from **Rs. 2 trillion to Rs.7.5 trillion since 2017.**
  - **Rs.1.5 trillion** worth of infrastructure projects are underway.
- **Tourism Boost**: Cultural sites like Ayodhya, Varanasi, and Mathura attract millions of tourists.
- **Infrastructure Development**: Half of India's expressways and 21 airports are in UP.
- **Startup Ecosystem**: The 'Nivesh Mitra' platform streamlines investment, supporting MSMEs and startups.
- **Agriculture and Rural Growth**: NABARD has provided Rs. 1 trillion in funding, and nearly 10,000 Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) are operational.

Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)

- FPOs are voluntary organizations controlled by their **farmer-members** who actively participate in setting their policies and making decisions.
- They are open to all persons able to use their services and willing to accept the responsibilities of membership, without **gender, social, racial, political** or **religious discrimination**.
- FPOs operatives provide education and training for their farmer-members, elected representatives, managers, and employees so that they can contribute effectively to the development of their FPOs.
- FPOs in Gujarat, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and some other states have shown encouraging results and have been able to realise higher returns for their produce.
  - For example, tribal women in the Pali district of Rajasthan formed a producer company and they are getting higher prices for custard apples.

New Noida Development Plan

Why in News?

Recently, the Uttar Pradesh government approved the development of **New Noida City** to boost residential, industrial, and logistics infrastructure by **2041.**

Key Points

- **Location**:
  - Spanning 209.11 sq. km, covering 84 villages in Gautam Buddha Nagar **and Bulandshahr districts.**
- **Features:**
  - Balance residential distribution and align with future growth.
  - Affordable homes for all categories, especially industrial workers.
  - Industrial hubs, Multi-Modal Transport Hub (MMTH), and Logistics Hub (MMLH).
- **Phased Development**:
  - **Phase 1 (2024-2028)**: Develop arterial roads over **1,432 hectares.**
  - **Phase 2 (2028-2034)**: Focus on Northern and Southern zones; develop 3,136 hectares.
  - **Phase 3 (2033-2039)**: Commercial and industrial spaces; develop 5,908 hectares.
  - **Phase 4 (2037-2043)**: Finalize industrial, public spaces, and residential areas.

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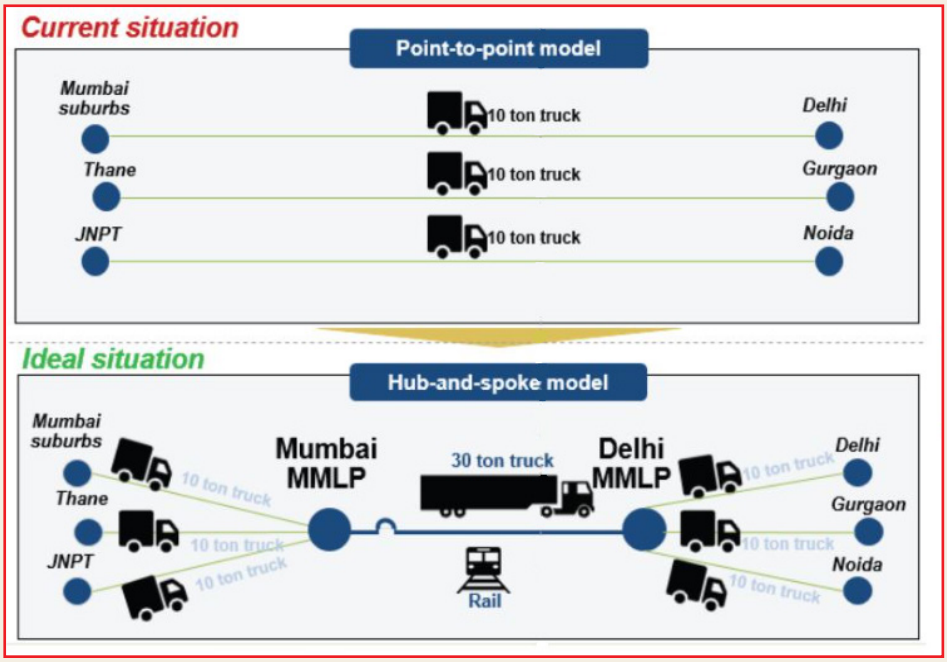
Multi Modal Logistics Park (MMLP)



- **About:**
  - Developed under a **'Hub & Spoke' model,** the MMLP will integrate multiple modes of freight transport through highways, railways & inland waterways.
  - The **Multi Modal Logistic Park project** is poised to develop state-of-the-art large scale warehousing facilities for different types of commodities, to become a one stop solution for all services related to cargo movement like warehousing, custom clearance, parking, maintenance of trucks etc.
    - It will have all the facilities like **warehouses, railway siding, cold storage, custom clearance house, yard facility, workshops, petrol pumps, truck parking, administrative building, boarding lodging, eating joints, water treatment plant, etc.**
- **Focus:**
  - The MMLPs will focus on a **technology driven implementation** for a state-of-the-art freight management system.
    - Many value-added services like packaging, repackaging and labelling will be available in these projects.
  - **MMLP will be a freight handling facility** for mechanised material handling and value-added services along with other associated facilities.

Kashi to Emerge As A Big Centre Of Healthcare

Why in News?

Recently, during his visit to Varanasi, the Prime Minister **inaugurated the RJ Sankara Eye Hospital**.

- Kashi, traditionally known as a hub of religion and spirituality, **is now also emerging as a significant healthcare center**. The hospital's establishment represents a fusion of modern healthcare and spiritual heritage.

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Key Points

- The newly inaugurated hospital will conduct 30,000 **free eye surgeries annually for patients from economically disadvantaged backgrounds**, following a cross-subsidization model where 75% of surgeries will be free and funded through the revenue generated from paying patients who constitute 25% of the beneficiaries.
- The facility will cater to the eye care needs of elderly individuals, children, and people **from 20 districts of eastern Uttar Pradesh**, as well as residents of nearby states such as Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh.
- **Other Launched Projects:**
  - PM's visit to Varanasi included **launching several development initiatives valued at over ₹6,700 crore**, including multiple airport projects.
  - At the Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport, he **laid the foundation for the expansion of the runway, a new terminal building**, and associated infrastructure at an estimated cost of ₹2,870 crore.

Note:

- Kashi Vishvanath Temple is **one of the most famous Hindu temples dedicated to Lord Shiva**.
  - Varanasi city is also **called Kashi**, and hence the temple is popularly called Kashi Vishvanath Temple.
- The temple **stands on the western bank of the holy river** Ganga, and is one of the twelve Jyotirlingas, the holiest of Shivatemples.
- The **main deity is known by the name Vishvanatha or Vishveshvara meaning "Ruler of The Universe"**.

Govt Plans Pre-Diwali Gifts for UP Employees

Why in News?

Recently, the Uttar Pradesh government is expected to offer multiple benefits to state employees ahead of Diwali.

Key Points

- **Three Potential Benefits**:
  - **Dearness Allowance (DA) Hike**: A **4%** increase in DA, bringing more financial relief to state employees by adjusting their income to match inflation.
  - **Bonus Announcement**: The state government may provide a Diwali bonus to employees, offering additional financial support for the festive season.
  - **Retirement Age Review**: Discussions are ongoing about possibly increasing the **retirement age** for specific government employees.
- **Dearness Allowance (DA)**:
  - It is the cost-of-living adjustment to offset inflation, provided to government employees and pensioners. It is calculated as a percentage of the **basic salary.**
- **Impact on Economy**:
  - **Increased Consumer Spending**: The hike boosts disposable income, especially around festive periods, spurring consumer demand.
  - **Inflation Control**: DA helps employees manage inflation, but an increase in demand could potentially raise inflation if supply doesn't keep pace.
  - **Fiscal Pressure**: For the government, DA hikes increase expenditure, which may strain the fiscal budget but stimulate economic growth through consumption.

Inflation

- Inflation, as defined by the International Monetary Fund, is the rate of increase in prices over a given period, encompassing a broad measure of overall price increases or for specific goods and services.
- It reflects the rising cost of living and indicates how much more expensive a set of goods and/or services has become over a **specified period, usually a year.**
  - In India, inflation's impact is particularly significant due to economic disparities and a large population.

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PM to Inaugurate Sports Facilities in Varanasi

Why in News?

Recently, Prime Minister Modi is set to inaugurate new sports facilities in Varanasi, enhancing opportunities for athletes.

Key Points

- PM Modi will inaugurate phases 2 and 3 of the National Center of Excellence at Dr. Sampurnanand Stadium, Varanasi.
  - The upgrade cost **Rs 325.65 crore**, enhancing infrastructure for over 20 sports disciplines.
  - The complex includes multi-level courts, swimming pools, athletic tracks, and spaces for indoor/outdoor sports, para-sports, and recovery zones.
  - PM Modi will also launch development projects worth over **Rs 1,000 crore**

Varanasi

- Varanasi is in southeastern Uttar Pradesh state. It is located on the left bank of the Ganges (Ganga) River and is one of the seven sacred cities of Hinduism.
- It is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. Its early history is that of the first Aryan settlement in the middle Ganges valley.
- Varanasi was the capital of the kingdom of Kashi during the time of the Buddha (6th century BCE), who gave his first sermon nearby at Sarnath.
- The city remained a **centre of religious, educational, and artistic activities as attested by the celebrated Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Xuanzang,** who visited it in about 635 CE.
- Varanasi subsequently declined during three centuries of Muslim occupation, beginning in 1194.
- Varanasi became an independent kingdom in the 18th century, and under subsequent British rule it remained a commercial and religious centre.
- In 1910, the British made Varanasi a new Indian state, with **Ramnagar (on the opposite bank) as headquarters but with no jurisdiction over the city of Varanasi.**

UP Government's Ordinances on Food Safety and Contamination

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government recently proposed two ordinances to address growing concerns over food contamination and anti-social activities in the food industry, spurred by a series of incidents involving contamination by human waste.

Key Points

- **New Food Ordinances**:
  - **Prevention of Pseudo and Anti-Harmony Activities and Prohibition of Spitting Ordinance 2024**.
  - **Uttar Pradesh Prevention of Contamination in Food (Consumer Right to Know) Ordinance 2024**.
  - These ordinances are designed to make food contamination by spitting or mixing human waste a cognizable and non-bailable offense.
- **Ordinance to Address "Anti-Social Elements" and "Illegal Citizens"**:
  - The ordinances will include provisions to take strict action against food establishment employees confirmed to be "illegal foreign citizens."
  - This move is aimed at weeding out individuals who hide their identities to engage in food contamination or other anti-social activities.

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- **Mandatory Name and Identity Display at Food Establishments**:
  - To promote transparency, the government has made it mandatory for all food establishments to prominently display the names of owners and managers.
  - Additionally, all workers in food establishments must wear **identity cards** while on duty.
  - This measure is aimed at ensuring accountability and preventing individuals from hiding their identity.
- **Compulsory Installation of CCTV Cameras**:
  - All eateries and food establishments will be required to **install** CCTV cameras in their kitchens and dining areas.
  - The footage must be kept for at least a month and be available to district authorities if required.
  - This will help monitor food preparation and service to prevent contamination.
- **Right to Information for Consumers**:
  - Every consumer will have the **right to essential information** about the food they consume and the establishments where it is prepared.
  - The ordinances ensure that sellers display clear signboards and avoid using false names or pseudonyms, holding them accountable for any violation.
- **Legal and Constitutional Process for an Ordinance**:
  - **Ordinance as a Legislative Tool**:
    - An ordinance is a temporary law enacted by the executive (Governor, at the state level) when the legislature is not in session.
    - It is issued under Article 213 of the Indian Constitution for states, which empowers the Governor to promulgate ordinances in urgent situations.
  - **Approval and Continuation**:
    - Once an ordinance is issued, it must be presented to the state legislature when it reconvenes.
    - The ordinance will cease to exist if it is not approved by both houses of the state legislature within six weeks from the start of the next session.
  - **Constitutional Safeguards**:
    - The ordinance must adhere to the principles of **reasonableness** and **public interest** under Articles 14 (Right to Equality) and 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty).
    - Judicial review is available if the ordinance is seen to violate fundamental rights or exceed the executive's constitutional mandate.

UP Government To Ban Passenger Travel on Tractor-Trolleys

Why in News?

In response to a series of accidents, the Uttar Pradesh government is enforcing a ban on the use of tractor trolleys for passenger transport to improve road safety.

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Safety first

In 2021, road traffic injuries were the 13th leading cause of death in India and the 12th leading cause of health loss.

Percentage of road traffic deaths by victims mode of transport in six States

	Chhattisgarh	Chandigarh	Delhi	Haryana	Maharashtra	Uttarakhand
Pedestrian	19	23	44	29	24	28
Bicycle	4	13	3	3	1	3
Motorised two-wheeler	58	51	40	47	58	48
Motorised three-wheeler	1	7	4	3	1	3
Car	4	4	5	8	6	7
Bus	1	1	0	1	1	4
Truck	5	1	2	5	5	4
Farm tractor	6	0	0	2	2	0
Others	0	1	1	1	2	1
Unknown	0	1	1	0	0	1
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100

Percentage of road traffic deaths by type of impacting vehicle in six States

	Chhattisgarh	Chandigarh	Delhi	Haryana	Maharashtra	Uttarakhand
Bicycle	0	0	1	0	1	0
Motorised two-wheeler	13	11	6	10	14	10
Motorised three-wheeler	0	7	2	1	0	1
Car	7	36	14	25	14	21
Bus	3	5	6	4	4	7
Truck	24	12	18	32	27	28
Farm tractor	5	1	1	7	4	6
Others	11	12	5	1	5	2
None	16	9	3	2	16	5
Unknown	18	9	45	17	15	21
Total (%)	100	100	100	100	100	100

Key Points

- **Strict Enforcement on Tractor Trolley Ban**: The Uttar Pradesh government has renewed its focus on enforcing the ban on tractor trolleys for passenger transport following multiple accidents.
- **Rural Dependence on Tractor Trolleys**: Tractor trolleys are commonly used in rural areas due to affordability and accessibility, despite being banned for passenger use.
- **Public Awareness Campaigns**: The government plans to launch awareness campaigns in rural areas, emphasizing the importance of safety over convenience.
- **Planned Safety Measures**: Posters and messaging campaigns will be used to educate the public and promote safer transportation alternatives.

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Uttar Pradesh Scraps Street Race from Grand Prix

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has intervened to cancel the proposed street race element for the Indian Grand Prix at the Buddh International Circuit, prioritizing logistics and safety.

- A **Grand Prix** is a premier motorsport event that forms part of the **Formula One (F1) World Championship,** as well as other racing series.

Key Points

- **Government Takes Control of Event Changes**: The Uttar Pradesh government has assumed control over a major change related to the Indian Grand Prix, canceling the idea of incorporating a street race element.
- **Street Race Proposal Scrapped**: Initial plans to include a street race element in the MotoGP event have been officially sidelined, in favor of a more streamlined approach.
- **Focus on Safety and Logistics**: The decision aligns with the state government's strategy to prioritize spectator safety, streamline event **logistics, and reduce potential disruptions.**
- **Commitment to Buddh International Circuit**: The government's move emphasizes maintaining the race at the Buddh International Circuit, which holds a long-term contract for hosting the MotoGP event.

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- **Centralizing Operations for Efficiency**: By eliminating the street race, the authorities aim for a smoother event execution, avoiding the **logistical challenges and risks associated with urban racing.**
- **Strengthening International Sporting Presence**: This intervention reflects Uttar Pradesh's growing role in hosting international sporting events, bolstering its image as a capable and reliable venue for global competitions.
- **Aligning with MotoGP Organizers' Expectations**: The decision also supports the MotoGP organizers' standards for participant and spectator safety, ensuring **high-quality event management.**

Buddh International Circuit

- The Buddh International Circuit is a motor racing track located in Jaypee Sports City, **Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, named after Gautama Buddha**, similar to the district of its location.
- The track was officially inaugurated on 18 October 2011.

Sakhi Niwas Hostels

Why in News?

Recently, the Uttar Pradesh government launched a new phase of its Mission Shakti initiative, aiming to provide safe housing for working women.

Key Points

- 18 new Sakhi Niwas hostels will be opened by October 2024, under Mission Shakti 5.0 in cities like Varanasi, Lucknow and Noida.
- Program offers safe, affordable housing near workplaces for working women.
  - Each hostel will accommodate 50 women, and married women can house children (up to 18 years for daughters, 12 years for sons).
- Central and state governments co-fund the project.
- "Nari Shakti 5.0" is a campaign by the Uttar Pradesh government.
  - The aim is to enhance the safety and awareness of women and children.

Mission Shakti

- **About:** Mission Shakti' is a scheme of the **Ministry of Women and Child Development** aimed at strengthening interventions for women safety, security and empowerment.
  - It seeks to realise the Government's commitment for **"women-led development"** by addressing issues affecting women on a **life-cycle continuum basis and by** making them equal partners in nation-building through convergence and citizen-ownership.
- **Sub-Schemes:** It has two sub-schemes - **'Sambal'** and **'Samarthya'**. While the "Sambal" sub-scheme is for safety and security of women, the "Samarthya" sub-scheme is for empowerment of women.
  - **Sambhal:**
    - The components of 'Sambal' sub-scheme consist of erstwhile schemes of One Stop Centre (OSC), Women Helpline (WHL), Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) with a new component of Nari Adalats - women's collectives to promote and facilitate alternative dispute resolution and gender justice in society and within families.
  - **Samarthya:**
    - The components of 'Samarthya' sub-scheme consist of erstwhile schemes of Ujjwala, Swadhar Greh **and** Working Women Hostel have been included with modifications.

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- In addition, the existing schemes of National Creche Scheme for children of working mothers and Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana under umbrella ICDS have now been included in Samarthya.
- A new component of Gap Funding for Economic Empowerment has also been added in the **Samarthya Scheme.**

Public Holiday for Navami in UP

Why in News?

Recently, the Uttar Pradesh government declared a public holiday on **11th October, 2024**, in observance of Navami, **a significant day in Hindu traditions.**

Key Points

- Navami marks the end of Navratri with rituals like **'Kanya Bhoj'** and havan (sacred fire ceremonies).
- In the Hindu calendar, Navami is the ninth day of the **lunar fortnight (Paksha)**. Each month has two Navami days, one on the ninth day of the **"bright" (Shukla)** fortnight and one on the ninth day of the "dark" (Krishna) fortnight.
- Navami is also associated with two festivals in Hinduism.
  - **Maha Navami:** The ninth day of Sharad Navratri, **Maha Navami** commemorates the day when Goddess Durga defeated the demon Mahishasura. It symbolizes the triumph of good over evil.
  - **Ram Navami:** A festival that celebrates the birth of Lord Rama.

Classification of Calendars in India

Calendar	Type	Zero Year	Origin	Key Features
Vikram Samvat	Hindu Lunar Calendar	57 B.C.	Introduced by King Vikramaditya after victory over Sakas	Lunar-based; 12 months with 354 days; divided into Shuklapaksha (bright half) and Krishnapaksha (dark half); 13th month (Adhik Mass) in certain years.
Saka Samvat	Hindu Solar Calendar	78 A.D.	Introduced by Saka rulers after defeating the Kushanas	Solar-based; adopted as the official calendar of India in 1957; each year has 365 days.
Hijri Calendar	Islamic Lunar Calendar	622 A.D.	Originated in Saudi Arabia	Lunar-based; 12 months with 354 days; the 9th month, Ramzaan, is observed for fasting.
Gregorian Calendar	Scientific Solar Calendar	1582 A.D.	Introduced by Pope Gregory XIII	Solar-based; replaced the Julian calendar; civil calendar in use today; 365 days with leap years to correct for 365.25 days.

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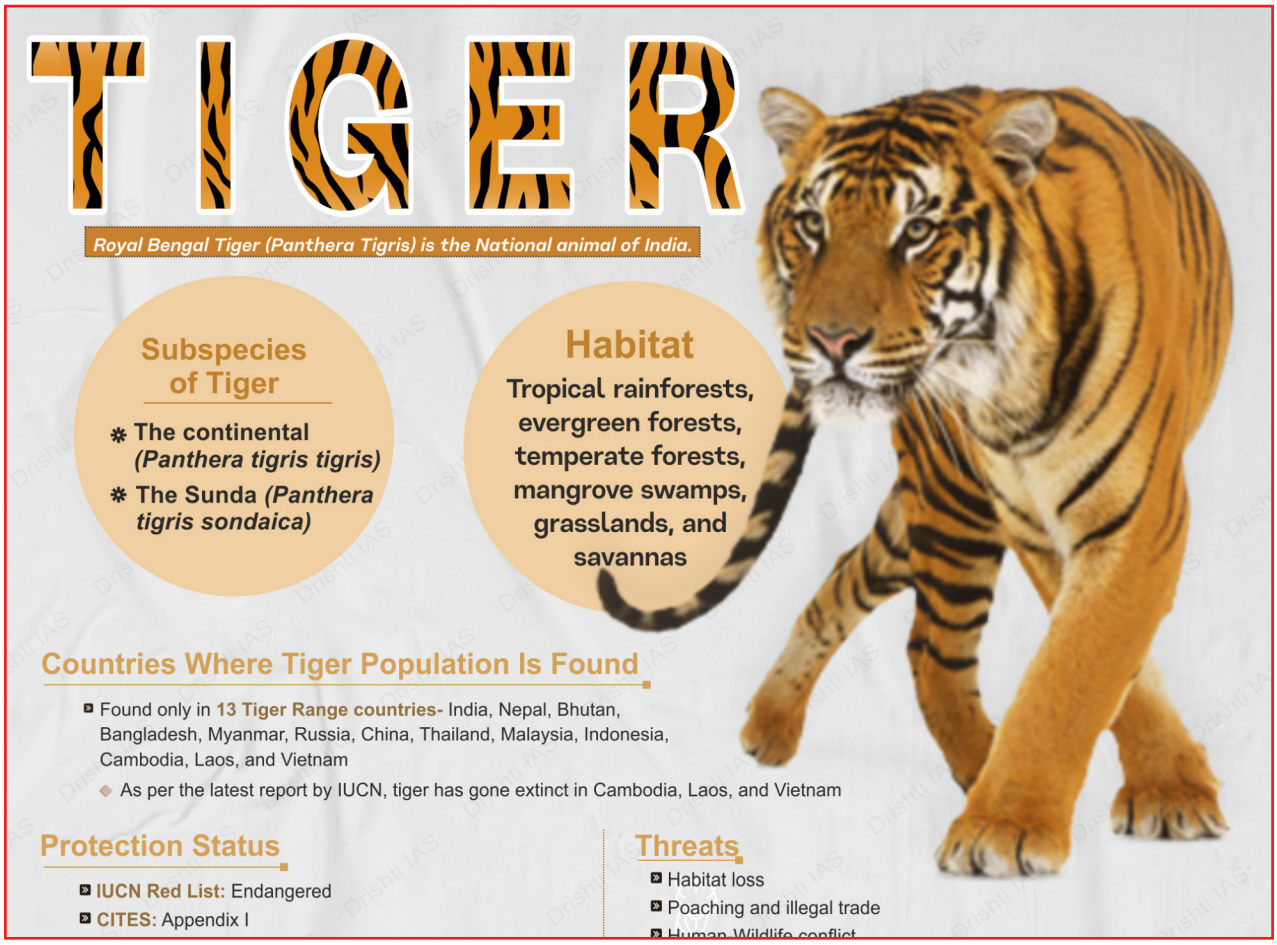
'Sugarcane Tigers' in Pilibhit Tiger Reserve

Why in News?

Recently, over 10 **tigers** have mysteriously disappeared from the sugarcane fields of Pilibhit, raising fears of poaching or migration.



Key Points

- **'Sugarcane Tigers':**
  - 'Sugarcane tigers' is a term used for tigers that inhabit sugarcane fields instead of forest areas.
  - These fields offer thick cover and prey, creating a habitat similar to forests.
  - Pilibhit, in Uttar Pradesh, is known for such tigers, as sugarcane fields offer shelter due to the shrinking forest cover and human encroachments in tiger habitats.
- **Pilibhit Tiger Reserve** :
  - It is located in Pilibhit and Shahjahanpur district of Uttar Pradesh.
  - It was notified as a **Tiger Reserve** in 2014.
    - In 2020, it bagged **international award TX2** for doubling up the number of tigers in the past four years.
  - It forms part of **Terai Arc Landscape in the upper Gangetic Plain.**

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- The northern edge of the reserve lies along the Indo-Nepal border while the southern boundary is marked by the river Sharada and Khakra.
- **Flora and Fauna:**
  - It is home to a habitat for over 127 animals, 326 bird species and 2,100 flowering plants.
  - Wild animals include tiger, swamp deer, bengal florican, leopard, etc.
  - It has high sal forests, plantations and grasslands with several water bodies.

UP Bypolls 2024

Why in News?

Recently, Uttar Pradesh is gearing up for by-polls in several constituencies, following vacancies created by various factors.

Key Points

- **About:**
  - Bypolls, also known as **bye-elections or special elections**, refer to elections held to **fill vacant seats in the legislative bodies of India.**
  - It serves as a **vital component within the broader electoral cycle** and complements regular elections by **addressing unforeseen vacancies.**
- **Purpose:**
  - The primary objective of bypolls is to ensure **the timely filing of vacant seats, enabling the representation of the affected constituency** or district in the legislative body.
- **Occurrence:**
  - Bypolls are conducted when a seat in the legislature becomes vacant due to reasons such as the **death, resignation, disqualification, or expulsion of a sitting member.**
- **Timeframe:**
  - Section 151A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 mandates the Election Commission to fill the casual vacancies in the Houses of Parliament and State Legislatures through **bye elections within six months from the date of occurrence of the vacancy**, provided that the **remainder of the term of a member in relation to a vacancy is one year or more.**
    - Hence, there is **no need to hold bye elections if the remaining term of the Lok Sabha is less than one year** from the date of occurrence of vacancies.
- **Impact:**
  - **Impact on Political Landscape:** Bye-elections often serve as a **litmus test for political parties and their popularity.**
    - They provide an opportunity for parties to **gauge public sentiment and assess their support base.**
  - **Impact on Government Majority:** Bye-election outcomes can affect the majority of the ruling government.
    - If the **ruling party loses a significant number of by-poll seats, it may lead to a loss of majority in the legislative body,** which can impact the government's stability and decision-making.
  - **Testing the Electoral Strategies:** Bye-elections provide an avenue for political parties to test their **electoral strategies and fine-tune their campaign approaches.**
    - Parties may experiment with **candidate selection, campaign themes, and messaging during by-polls**, which can influence their strategies in subsequent elections.

Kumbh Summit 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the UP government has launched a series of cultural events across the state for the preparation of Maha Kumbh 2025.

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Key Points

- **Kumbh Summit Events**:
  - Launched across 18 tehsils of U.P. as a prelude to Maha Kumbh 2025.
  - Events include **"Kumbh Abhinandan"** road show, **Bal-Yuva Kumbh, Kala-Sanskriti Kumbh, Kavi Kumbh, and Bhakti Kumbh.**
  - Universities and educational institutions will take part in these cultural celebrations.
  - Various cultural academies, including Lalit Kala Academy and Sangeet Natak Academy, are responsible for organizing competitions.
  - Focus on eco-friendly practices like 'zero plastic usage' and AI tools for security.
  - Ensuring transport via 700 electric buses and enhancing accessibility for devotees during peak festival days.
  - Deadline of December 15, 2024 is set for all facilities to be ready for Maha Kumbh.

Maha Kumbh

- Kumbh Mela comes under United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.
- It is the largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims on earth, during which participants bathe or take a dip in a **sacred river.**
- It takes place on the banks of the Godavari river in Nashik, **the** Shipra river in Ujjain, the Ganges in Haridwar, and the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna, and the mythical Saraswati river in Prayagraj. The confluence is referred to as the 'Sangam'.
- As it is held in four different cities in India, it involves different social and cultural activities, making this a culturally diverse festival.
- The over month-long fair is marked by the construction of a massive tented township, complete with cottages, huts, platforms, civic facilities, administrative and security measures.
- It is organized immaculately by the government, the local authorities and the police.
- The mela is especially **renowned for the presence of an extraordinary array of religious** ascetics enticed from remote hideaways in forests, mountains and caves

UP International Trade Show, 2024

Why in News?

Recently, the **UP International Trade Show, 2024** was launched to promote Uttar Pradesh's growing status as a global investment hub, emphasizing MSMEs, ODOP, **and** GI products.

Key Points

- **Showcase of Uttar Pradesh's Growth:**
  - UP International Trade Show, 2024, aims to project Uttar Pradesh as a major growth engine in India.
  - Led by Prime Minister and Chief Minister, the state targets achieving a trillion-dollar economy.
  - In this International Trade show the partner country is **Vietnam.**
  - The show highlights UP's business, trade, craft, culture, cuisine, and innovation.
- **Focus on MSMEs and Economic Development:**
  - The trade show promotes **MSMEs,** Geographical Indication (GI) products, **and** One District, One Product (ODOP) **schemes.**
  - It provides a platform for enterprises to showcase and expand their reach globally, driving economic growth.
  - It also features **promotional schemes and initiatives from both government** and private sectors.

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- **Milestones and Achievements:**
  - The inaugural edition **(21st - 25th Sept, 2023)** attracted foreign buyers from over 60 countries.
  - Inaugurated by Hon'ble President of India, **Smt. Droupadi Murmu,** with the presence of Chief Minister.

"Radio Man Of India" Sets Record

Why in News?

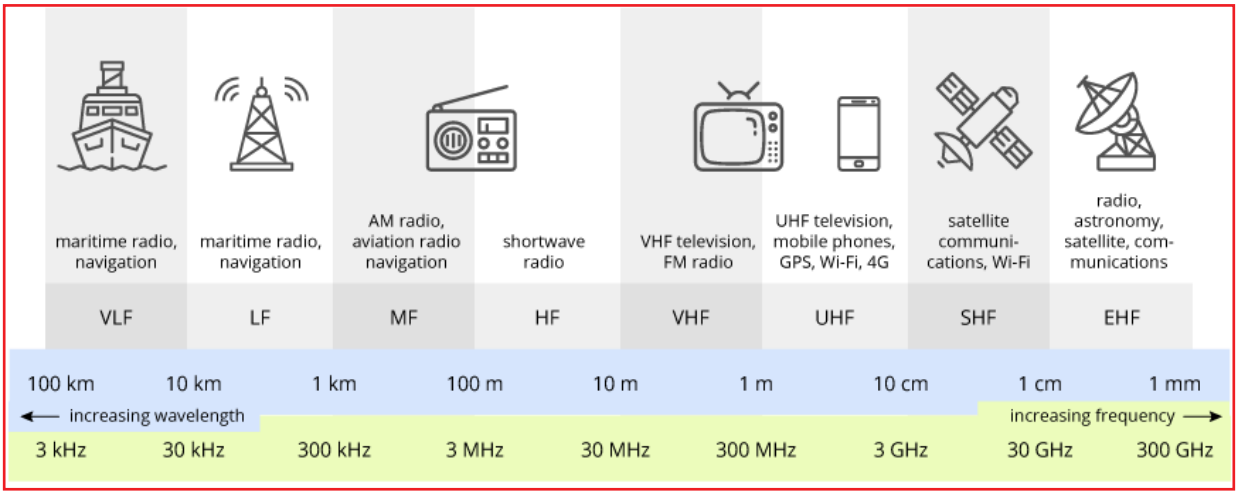
Ram Singh Boudh from Uttar Pradesh sets a **Guinness World Record** with his unique radio collection, preserving the legacy of radios.

Key Points

- **World Record Radio Collection**:
  - Ram Singh Boudh, famously known as the **"Radio Man of India,"** has amassed a collection of 1,257 unique radios, dating from the **1920s to 2010.**
  - His collection surpassed the previous world record of **625 radios held by M Prakash.**
- **Prime Minister's Recognition**:
  - Boudh's passion for preserving the legacy of radios gained national recognition when the Prime Minister mentioned him during the Mann Ki Baat radio program in November 2023.
  - PM Modi highlighted Boudh's dedication to keeping radios relevant, noting that his efforts sparked greater curiosity about his collection.
  - The Prime Minister acknowledged that **Mann Ki Baat** itself has revitalized interest in radios and Akashvani (All India Radio), making them popular once again in many households.

Radio Spectrum

- The radio spectrum (also known as **Radio Frequency or RF**) is a part of the electromagnetic spectrum, electromagnetic waves in this frequency range are called radio frequency bands or simply **'radio waves'.**
  - Radio waves have the longest wavelengths in the electromagnetic spectrum. These were discovered by **Heinrich Hertz in the late 1880s.**
- RF bands spread in the range between **30 kHz and 300 GHz** (alternative point of view offers coverage 3 KHz – 300 GHz).



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UP Approves New Universities, Jobs

Why in News?

Recently, the Uttar Pradesh government has approved key **policies and initiatives** to enhance education quality and employment opportunities.

Key Points

- **Policy Approval:**
  - The **'Uttar Pradesh Higher Education Promotion Policy, 2024'** was approved by the cabinet to improve education quality and boost employment.
  - **Includes provisions such as:**
    - Stamp duty exemptions.
    - Capital subsidies.
    - Special incentives for sponsoring bodies.
    - Additional benefits for top 50-ranked universities.
- **Establishment of New Private Universities:**
  - **Two new private universities approved:**
    - **KD University** to be established by **Rajiv Memorial Academic Welfare Society** in **Mathura.**
    - **Vidya University** to be set up by **Vidya Bal Mandali** in **Meerut** on a **42.755-acre campus.**
- **Impact on Higher Education:**
  - Aims to enhance private investment to meet increasing demand for local higher education.
  - Provides access to high-quality education within Uttar Pradesh.
  - Expected to create both direct and indirect job opportunities for the youth.
- **Self-Employment Scheme:**
  - New scheme introduced to promote self-employment:
    - Subsidies on **loans up to Rs 5 lakh for projects** in microenterprises and the service sector.
    - Aim to set up **10 lakh micro units in 10 years.**
    - Support for **1 lakh educated and trained youth annually.**
  - **Eligibility and Focus:**
    - Applicants must have at least an **eighth-grade education.**
    - Priority for those with **intermediate-level education.**
    - Scheme aims to boost employment in rural and urban areas.

UP Aims for 'Zero Poverty' Goal

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister announced a campaign to make Uttar Pradesh the first state in India to achieve zero poverty within a year.

Key Points

- **Campaign Objective:**
  - Identify and support the poorest families in each gram panchayat to integrate them into the mainstream.
  - **Families will receive assistance in:**
    - Food and clothing.
    - Quality education.
    - Healthcare services.
    - Housing facilities.
    - Stable income sources.
- **Family Identification Process:**
  - Targeting the poorest **10-25 families per gram panchayat** using a three-tier, transparent selection method:
    - **Level 1:** Identification through the **'Mop-up' mobile app** based on criteria such as homelessness, landlessness, reliance on daily wages, and lack of resources.
    - **Level 2:** Formation of a **village-level committee comprising five members (gram pradhan, former gram pradhan, local school headmaster, and representatives from self-help groups).**

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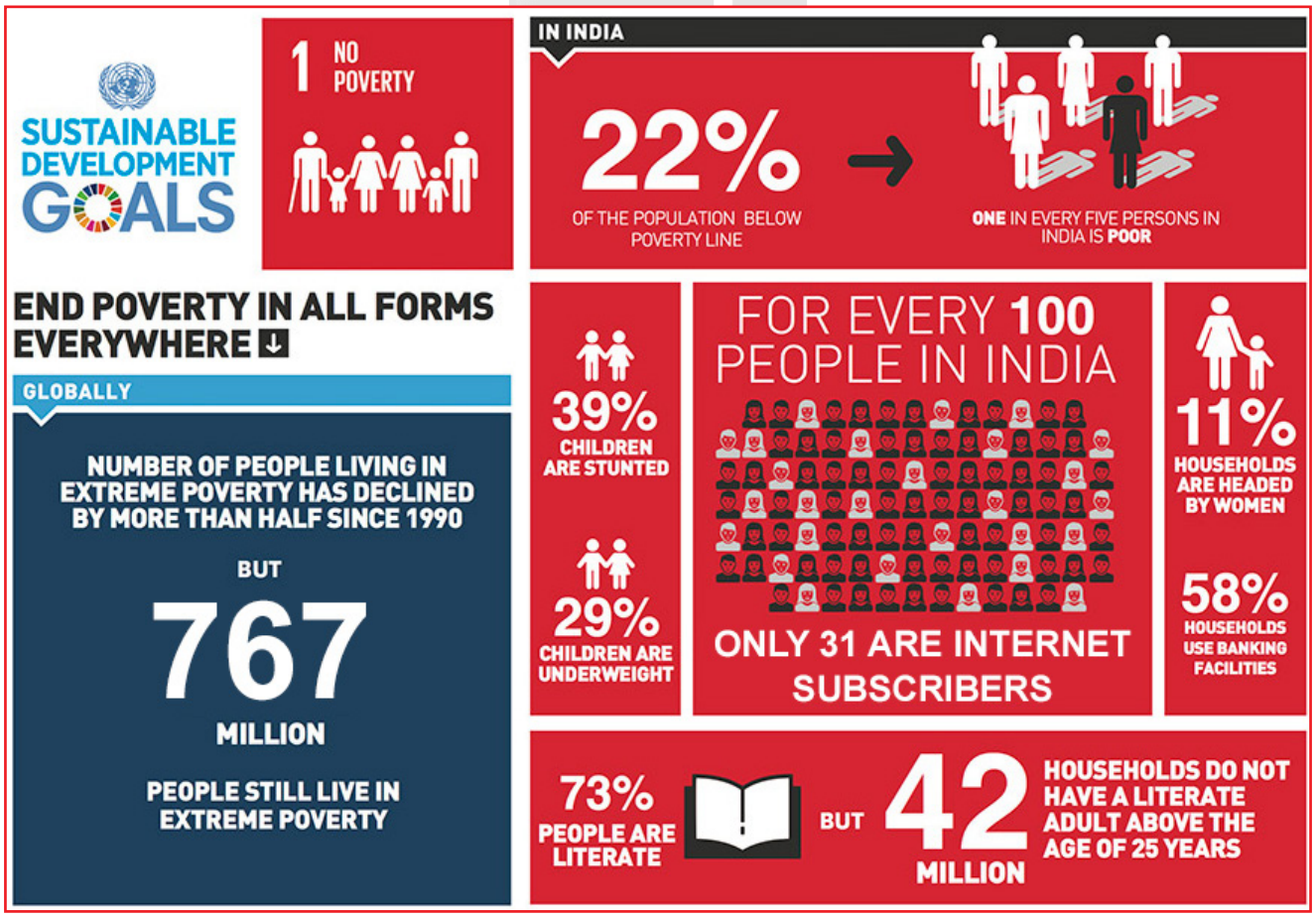
- **Level 3:** Families receive an automated vulnerability rating via a digital system post-committee recommendations.

Government Schemes Benefits:

- Eligible families will gain access to various government schemes, including:
  - Ration cards and food supplies from the **Department of Food and Civil Supplies.**
  - Benefits under housing schemes like **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.**
  - Educational support such as school admissions and uniforms.
  - Medical facilities through **Ayushman Bharat Insurance** and other health initiatives.
- Integration with schemes from the **Labor Department, MNREGA, State Rural Livelihood Mission,** and others.
- Access to skill development initiatives and employment benefits.
- Collaboration with educational institutions to develop tailored sustainable income plans for identified families.
- **Zero Poverty portal (ZeroPoverty.in) will be integrated with the Family ID portal** for efficient data management and support for families needing ration cards.



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Uttar Pradesh Boosts Solar Energy Production

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has approved significant solar energy projects to enhance renewable energy production in the state.

Key Points

- **Approval of Solar Parks:**
  - Development of solar parks in Bundelkhand approved under the new energy policy.
  - Two major solar projects covering over **1,500 hectares of land.**
  - Expected capacity of 450 MW, making it one of the largest solar parks in India.
- **Renewable Energy Goals:**
  - Contributes to Uttar Pradesh's target of reaching **22,000 MW of solar energy production by 2026-2027.**
- **Current Solar Capacity:**
  - As of August 2024, Uttar Pradesh government has installed a total solar PV capacity of 3,280.15 MW, including:
    - Approximately **2,965.12 MW from utility-scale projects.**
    - Over **260 MW** from solar rooftop **installations.**
    - Around 315 MW from off-grid solar and KUSUM projects (according to Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) data).

Negligence in Gang Chart Approval

Why in News?

Recently, the Uttar Pradesh government informed the Allahabad High Court about transferring the District Magistrate of Amroha for negligence in approving gang charts without proper justification violating the **Uttar Pradesh Gangster and Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Rules, 2021**.

Key Points

- **Case Background**:
  - The matter arose from a writ petition filed to quash an FIR lodged against him under **Section 3(1) of the UP Gangsters and Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act, 1986**.
  - The petitioner contended that neither the Superintendent of Police (SP) nor the DM of Amroha recorded satisfaction while approving the gang chart.
  - **A Gang chart** is a document that contains details about an accused's criminal history and other relevant information in cases related to the **Uttar Pradesh Gangsters and Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act, 1986.**
- **High Court's Observations**:
  - A bench comprising **Justice Vivek Kumar Birla** and **Justice Arun Kumar Singh Deshwal** noted that the SP-Amroha and DM-Amroha did not record satisfaction while preparing the gang chart, as required by **Rule 16(2) of the 2021 Rules**.
  - The Allahabad High Court noted that the DM's actions were contrary to both the 2021 Rules and the guidelines set by the HC in the **Sanni Mishra vs State of UP case**.
  - The court labeled this as **"sheer negligence,"** noting similar cases from Amroha where officials did not properly prepare gang charts according to the rules.
- **Court's Final Decision**:
  - The court refrained from issuing direct action against the officers and left the decision to the state government.

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The Uttar Pradesh Gangsters and Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Act, 1986

- **Purpose:** To prevent gang-related and anti-social activities.
- **Scope:** Targets individuals involved in organized crime, violent offenses, or habitual criminals.
- **Provisions:**
  - Defines "gang" and "gangster" in legal terms.
  - Allows authorities to take preventive action, including detaining suspects.
  - Allows the attachment of properties obtained through criminal activities.
    - The act empowers district magistrates and police to approve gang charts (a formal record of an individual's gang-related activities).

UP Gangster and Anti-Social Activities (Prevention) Rules, 2021

- **Purpose:** Provides detailed guidelines for implementing the UP Gangsters Act.
- **Key Provisions:**
  - **Recording Satisfaction:** The competent authority, usually the District Magistrate, must record satisfaction while forwarding and approving gang charts.
  - **Joint Meetings:** Mandates joint meetings between the Superintendent of Police and the District Magistrate before approving a gang chart.
  - **Due Process:** Specifies procedural guidelines to ensure the preparation of gang charts is thorough and based on concrete evidence.

Major Job Initiative in Uttar Pradesh

Why in News?

Recently, **Uttar Pradesh** Chief Minister declared that the state government will provide **2 lakh jobs to youth over the next two years.**

Key Points

- The Chief Minister distributed appointment letters to more than 5,000 youths during a **district-level employment and loan fair in Muzaffarnagar.**
  - He also distributed loans exceeding Rs 30 crore to selected beneficiaries and **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME)** entrepreneurs, with an aim to empower them to grow their businesses and bolster the local economy.
  - **Tablets and smartphones** were distributed to over 1,000 youths under **the Swami Vivekananda Yuva Sashaktikaran Yojana.**
  - Also announced that **recruitment for more than 60,000 police positions.**

Swami Vivekananda Youth Empowerment Scheme

- Under this scheme, students enrolled in various teaching/training programs of higher/higher **educational institutions, graduate, postgraduate, diploma, skill development, paramedical and nursing students** etc. will get the benefit of this scheme.
- The state government will **distribute tablets/smart phones to the students** through their respective university/college/institute.
- The devices will help in spreading awareness about the various developmental schemes and programs of the government among the students.

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Uttar Pradesh Board to Introduce Vocational Education

Why in News?

According to the sources, The **schools recognized by the Uttar Pradesh Board** are preparing to incorporate vocational education **from class 6 onwards.**

Key Points

- The primary aim is to **provide students with crucial skills** across different vocational subjects **by the time they reach class 12,** enabling them to then venture into entrepreneurial pursuits on their own.
- The transformative change is being implemented under the New Education Policy (NEP), 2020 and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), with the most significant alterations occurring in the realm of vocational education.
  - The **curriculum will cover a wide array of subjects**, including cookery, confectionery, beekeeping, nursery management, food preservation, fruit preservation, and crop protection, all of which involve working with living organisms.
  - In the **machinery category**, students will have the opportunity to explore subjects like automobile engineering, IT, plumbing, electrical work, solar system installation, mobile repairing, textile design, photography, garment design and decoration, stenography, typing, printing, radio and television technology.
  - The **service provider category** will offer courses in health care, retail business, security, disaster management, library science, washing and dyeing, banking, accountancy, tourism, and hospitality.
- From **class 6 to 10, students will receive foundational education** in these subjects, and in **class 11 and 12, they will specialize in one of these areas.**
  - The vocational subject offerings include 31 subjects up to high school and 44 subjects in intermediate. The syllabus for these subjects is being developed at the **NCERT level.**

National Curriculum Framework

- **About:**
  - **NCF is one of the key components of the New Education Policy (NEP), 2020**, that enables and energizes this transformation, informed by the aims, principles, and approach of NEP 2020.
  - The NCF has undergone four revisions in the past - in **1975, 1988, 2000, and 2005**. The **proposed revision, if implemented, would be the fifth iteration** of the framework.
- **Four Sections of NCF:**
  - **NCF for School Education (NCF-SE)**
  - **NCF for Early Childhood Care and Education (Foundational Stage)**
  - **NCF for Teacher Education**
  - **NCF for Adult Education**
- **Objective:**
  - It aims to **help in positively transforming the school education system of India** as envisioned in NEP 2020, through corresponding positive changes in the curriculum including pedagogy.
  - It aims to **realize the highest quality education for all children, consistent with realizing an equitable, inclusive, and plural society** as envisaged by the Constitution of India.

Uttar Pradesh New Social Media Policy

Why in News?

Recently, The **Uttar Pradesh Cabinet** approved a **new social media policy,** aimed at **regulating content across** platforms including **Facebook, X, Instagram, and YouTube.**

Key Points

- According to the policy, **social media influencers can earn up to Rs 8 lakh per month** by **sharing the**

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government's schemes and initiatives on their platforms.

- The residents of the state who are residing in different parts of the country and abroad will be ensured to get employment in large numbers.

- According to the sources, for listing, each of X, Facebook, Instagram and YouTube has been **divided into four categories based on subscribers and followers.**
  - The **category-wise maximum payout limit** for payments to account holders or operators or influencers of **X, Facebook, Instagram** has been **fixed at Rs 5 lakh, Rs 4 lakh, Rs 3 lakh and Rs 2 lakh per month** respectively.
  - The **category wise maximum payout limit** for videos, shorts, podcast payments **on YouTube** has been **fixed at Rs 8 lakh, Rs 7 lakh, Rs 6 lakh and Rs 4 lakh per month**, respectively.
- The government has listed a **digital agency, 'V-Form,'** to handle advertisements. It will be **responsible for showcasing videos, tweets, posts, and reels.**
- The policy also introduces **guidelines for addressing objectionable** social media content.
  - Action will be taken for anti-national, anti-social, fake news **or inflammatory content posted on social media.**

Scholarship to Students Of Sanskrit Schools

Why in News?

Recently, The Uttar Pradesh government has decided to give **scholarships to all students** studying in over 500 **Sanskrit schools** in the state.

Key Points

- The state also **removed the condition** that their **family income should be less than Rs 50,000 annually.**
- Under this new scheme, a **scholarship of Rs 50 per month** will be given to the children of **class 6 and 7, and Rs 75** to the children of **class 8.**
  - The students of **classes 9 and 10 will get Rs 100 per month** and those studying in **classes 11 and 12 will be given Rs 200.**

Relief and Rehabilitation Fund for Wayanad

Why in News?

Recently, The **Uttar Pradesh government** has **sanctioned Rs 10 crore for the Kerala government** to support **relief and rehabilitation** efforts in the landslide-affected Wayanad district.

Key Points

- The Wayanad district of Kerala experienced a **devastating landslide disaster in early July 2024** due to **heavy rainfall and fragile ecological conditions.**
- The **landslides in Chooralmala and Mundakkai villages** killed at least 144 people and injured 197, after the district received over **140 mm** of rain in **24 hours**, saturating the soil and weakening its binding to the underlying hard rocks.

Landslides

- **About:**
  - A landslide is the **downward movement of rock, soil, and debris** on a slope, ranging from small shifts to large, destructive events.
  - It can occur on **natural or man-made slopes and is triggered by factors like heavy rainfall,** earthquakes, volcanic activity, **human activities,** and changes in groundwater levels.
- **Government Initiatives to Mitigate Landslide Risks in India:**
  - **National Landslide Risk Management Strategy (2019):** National Landslide Risk Management Strategy (2019) is a comprehensive strategy addressing **hazard mapping, monitoring, early warning systems, awareness programs, capacity building, policies, and stabilisation measures.**

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- **Landslide Risk Mitigation Scheme (LRMS):** Landslide Risk Mitigation Scheme (LRMS) **under preparation**, aims to provide **financial support for tailored landslide mitigation projects** in vulnerable states, focusing on disaster prevention, mitigation strategies, and research and development for monitoring critical landslides.
  - This initiative will contribute to the establishment of an Early Warning System (EWS) and enhance capacity-building efforts.
- **Flood Risk Mitigation Scheme (FRMS):** Flood Risk Mitigation Scheme (FRMS) for developing flood shelters, river basin-specific early warning systems, and digital elevation maps for flood preparedness and evacuation.
- **National Guidelines on Landslides and Snow Avalanches: Guidelines by** National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) covering hazard assessment, risk management, structural and non-structural measures, institutional mechanisms, financial arrangements, and community participation.
- **Landslide Atlas of India:** It is a detailed resource that documents landslide events in the country's vulnerable areas and includes damage assessments for certain sites. Developed by the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) under Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), it offers important information and insights related to landslides in India.

Uttar Pradesh Aims to Attract More Tourists By 2028

Why in News?

According to the sources, **Uttar Pradesh** is set to become a **premier** tourism **destination** in India, with an **ambitious goal of attracting 80 crore tourists by the year 2028.**

Key Points

- **Uttar Pradesh saw a surge in tourist numbers**, from 23 crore in 2016-17 to 48 crore in 2023-24, a **growth of 51%**.
- The state government is developing **12 new** tourism circuits **across the state** to enhance and promote key locations.
  - 12 new tourism circuits are: **Ramayana Circuit, Sufi-Kabir Circuit, Bundelkhand Circuit, Jain Circuit, Krishna-Braj Circuit, Shakti-Peeth Circuit, Mahabharata Circuit, Wildlife & ECO Tourism Circuit, Swantantrata Sangram Circuit, Aadhyatmik Circuit, Buddhist Circuit** and **Craft Circuit.**
- Efforts are being made to **improve local infrastructure and accommodation options** to cater to the growing number of tourists.
- The state is focusing on **spiritual tourism**, with many devotees visiting religious sites such as **Ayodhya, Kashi, Mathura, Naimisharanya, and Prayagraj.**
- The Chief Minister has emphasized the need to promote tourism alongside industrial development, leveraging the state's cultural and spiritual assets like the **Taj Mahal and Ram Mandir** to boost the tourism sector's contribution

Important Fairs of Uttar Pradesh

- **Taj Mahotsav:**
  - It is a vibrant **10-day festival** held annually at **Shilpgram in Agra**. This celebration draws inspiration from the rich **Mughal and Nawabi culture** that thrived in Uttar Pradesh during the 18th and 19th centuries.
- **Kumbh Mela:**
  - It is **one of the largest religious gatherings in the world,** celebrated by Hindus.
  - The festival is held at **Prayagraj, Haridwar, Ujjain and Nasik** every four years by rotation.
    - Pilgrims gather to bathe in the **sacred rivers (Ganges, Yamuna, Saraswati, Godavari, and Shipra)**, seeking spiritual purification.

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- **Ganga Mahotsav:**
  - The **Ganges River** is very important to India and has supported many civilizations along its banks. A festival is celebrated in **Varanasi during the Karthik month** to thank the river goddess for her blessings and to ask for more.
  - The ghats are decorated with lights and flowers, and on Karthik Poornima, people gather by the river to light and float earthen lamps.

SLCR Project in Varanasi

Why in News?

Recently, The **Green Strategic Partnership between the Governments of India and Denmark** has facilitated major cooperation, resulting in the establishment of the **Smart Laboratory on Clean Rivers (SLCR) in Varanasi.**

Key Points

- It is a unique tripartite initiative between the **Government of India (Department of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation)**, the **Indian Institute of Technology - Banaras Hindu University (IIT-BHU)**, and **Government of Denmark**, to bring excellence in small river rejuvenation and management.
- The SLCR seeks to restore the **Varuna River** using sustainable methods.
  - Its goals include establishing a collaborative platform for government agencies, academic institutions, and local communities to exchange knowledge and devise solutions for maintaining clean river water.
  - The initiative includes a hybrid lab model at IIT-BHU and a living lab on the Varuna River to test and scale solutions in real-world environments.
- The **Indo-Danish Joint Steering Committee (JSC)** is the highest forum for SLCR which provides strategic guidance and reviews progress.
- The **Project Review Committee (PRC)**, with members from **National Mission on Clean Ganga (NMCG)**, **Central Water Commission (CWC)**, **Central Ground Water Board (CGWB)**, **IIT-BHU and Denmark's Urban Sector Counsellor will oversee quality control at project level.**
- **Four projects** to be taken up under the collaboration. These are:
  - The First project involves creating a **Decision Support System (DSS) for water management**, designed to analyze basin water dynamics using hydrological models, scenario generation, forecasting, and data analytics.
  - The second project focuses on the **characterization of emerging pollutants and fingerprint analysis**. It will use advanced analytical techniques, such as chromatography and mass spectrometry, to identify and quantify contaminants.
  - The **Hydrogeological Model of the Varuna Basin for Recharge Sites** will be the fourth project. It aims to **enhance base flow through Managed Aquifer Recharge (MAR).**

Varuna River

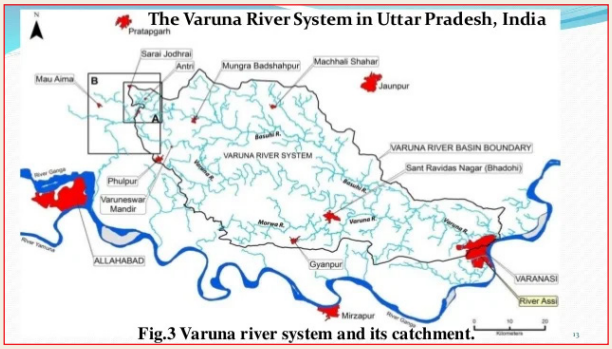

Fig.3 Varuna river system and its catchment.

- It is a **Minor Tributary of the Ganga River**. It **rises from** Phulpur town in the **Prayagraj district.**
  - It **flows into the Ganges river** near Sarai Mohana village **in the Varanasi district**.
- The **name 'Varanasi' district is derived from** the names of Two rivers, **Varuna and Assi rivers.**

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Janmashtami in Uttar Pradesh

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh is underway with **Janmashtami celebrations**, particularly in **Ayodhya** and **Vrindavan**, where devotees are visiting temples and shopping for the festival.

Key Points

- **Krishna Janmashtami,** also called **Gokulashtami** or **Shrikrishna Jayanti**, is a major Hindu festival celebrating the birth of Lord Krishna, the **eighth avatar of Vishnu**.
- Krishna Janmashtami is celebrated on the **Ashtami (eighth day)** of **Krishna Paksha** in the **Bhadrapada month** of the **lunisolar Hindu calendar**, usually in **August** or **September.**
- One of the key highlights of **Janmashtami** is the **"Dahi Handi"** event.

UP RERA Halts 400 Projects Over Missing Land Records

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh Real Estate Regulatory Authority (UP RERA)** has suspended around **400** projects on its portal because the developers failed to upload necessary **land records, maps,** or **both.**

- Many of these projects are located in the **National Capital Region (NCR).**

Key Points

- **Reason for Action:** Despite repeated notices since 2018, many promoters did not comply with the requirement to upload these documents.
- **Objective:** The decision aims to protect allottees from **potential fraud** by ensuring they are aware of the status of these projects before investing.
- **Current Compliance:** Only **57 out of the 400 projects** have provided the necessary explanations or documents.
- **Future Steps:** Promoters are warned to upload the required documents promptly, or face strict punitive actions.

Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016

The **Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016** is an Act of the Parliament of India which seeks to protect home-buyers as well as help boost investments in the real estate industry.

- The Act came into force from 1 May 2016.
- **Objective:**
  - To establish the **Real Estate Regulatory Authority** for regulation and promotion of the **Real Estate sector.**
  - To ensure transparency in projects.
  - To protect the interest of consumers in the Real Estate Sector and to establish an adjudicating mechanism for speedy dispute redressal.
  - To provide proper information about the Builder.
  - Give advice to the government on how to develop and promote the real estate sector.

Scheme to Promote Entrepreneurship Among Youth

Why in News?

Recently, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister announced the launch of a new initiative, the **Mukhyamantri Yuva Udyam Vikas Abhiyan Yojana**, aimed at empowering youth.

Key Points

- Under the scheme, financial support will be provided to young individuals interested in entrepreneurship, with a target of establishing one million **micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME)** units across the state.
  - Over **16.2 million young people have secured employment** through investments made in the State.

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- 62 lakh youth have been connected with **self-employment opportunities** by leveraging both Central and State Government schemes.
- To further **boost entrepreneurship, a dedicated start-up fund has been established** to finance new ventures.

Resolution Of Issues in NH Projects

Why in News?

In an official statement, **Uttar Pradesh** Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath **assured the Centre of timely resolution of any issues** in the execution of **national highway projects** in the state.

Key Points

- The **departmental land will be provided free of charge** for the expansion of national highways in Uttar Pradesh.
  - The process of land acquisition and compensation distribution would be completed within the stipulated time.
- The CM also emphasised the need to complete projects related to the **Mahakumbh**, which will be held in 2025.

Maha Kumbh

- Kumbh Mela comes under **United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.**
- It is the largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims on earth, during which participants bathe or take a dip in a sacred river.
  - It takes place on the banks of the **Godavari river in Nashik, the Shipra river in Ujjain,** the Ganges in Haridwar, and the confluence of the **Ganges, Yamuna**, and the mythical **Saraswati river in Prayagraj**. The confluence is referred to as the 'Sangam'.
- As it is held in four different cities in India, it involves different social and cultural activities, making this a **culturally diverse festival.**
- The **over month-long fair** is marked by the construction of a massive tented township, complete with cottages, huts, platforms, civic facilities, administrative and security measures.
  - It is organized immaculately by the government, the local authorities and the police.
- The mela is especially **renowned for the presence of an extraordinary array of religious ascetics** enticed from remote hideaways in forests, mountains and caves.

Toll-Free Number for Vidya Samiksha Kendras

Why in News?

According to the sources, the **Uttar Pradesh government** is set to implement a **toll-free number system** for the **Vidya Samiksha Kendras** as part of its efforts to **improve the quality of education.**

Key Points

- This toll-free line will act as a **platform for gathering feedback, addressing concerns, and resolving school education inquiries from parents, students, and teachers.**
  - It will use **interactive voice response (IVR) technology** to address various educational concerns.
- This initiative is anticipated to **increase public involvement and bolster the education system** in order to support students at the primary, upper primary, and composite school levels across the state.
  - Additionally, all Vidya Samiksha Kendras will be incorporated into this process.

Vidya Samiksha Kendras (VSKs)

- **About:**
  - VSK is aimed at **leveraging data and technology** to bring a big leap in learning outcomes.

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- This will cover data of more than **15 Lakh schools**, 96 Lakh teachers and 26 Crore students and analyze them meaningfully using big data analysis, **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and machine learning in order to enhance the overall monitoring of the education system and thereby improving learning outcomes.

- **Objectives:**
  - To monitor the **real-time status of various projects/ activities** under the ambit of Samagra Shiksha.
  - To keep track of enrolled **students including learning outcomes**, Dropouts, support required by teachers and schools, etc.
  - To monitor and **track field level academic and non-academic activities** at state level and also empower administrators and teachers in the field to take data driven decisions.
  - To set up a centralized **help desk for grievance redressal mechanisms** for stakeholders of the School ecosystem.
  - To identify and analyse improvement areas for decision making and implementation that needs urgent attention.

Uttar Pradesh to Commemorate Partition Horrors

Why in News?

According to the sources, The **Uttar Pradesh** government is preparing to observe **Partition Horrors Remembrance Day** on **14th August, 2024**.

Key Points

- In order to **pay tribute to those who lost their lives during the partition** of India, it has been decided to commemorate the **'Partition Horrors Memorial Day'.**
- It serves as a powerful **reminder to eliminate discrimination, animosity, and ill will**, while also **inspiring unity, social harmony, and the empowerment of humanity.**
- On this occasion, the state government will organize various events and programs across the 75 districts of the state.
  - **Films and documentaries related to the 'Partition' will be screened** in schools, colleges, and universities, as well as at the exhibition site.
  - **Students of various educational institutions will be taken on a tour of these exhibitions** and they should be made aware of this historical event.

Partition of India

- The **Partition of India in 1947** was a **pivotal moment in South Asian history**, leading to the **division of British India** into two independent countries: **India and Pakistan.**
  - This **separation was based on religious distinctions**, with India emerging as a predominantly Hindu nation and Pakistan being established as a separate homeland for Muslims.
- The partition was a response to **escalating religious tensions** and the demands for distinct nations.
- The process was characterized by widespread **violence and mass migrations**, as **millions of people moved between the two newly formed nations.**
- The **partition triggered one of the largest and most tragic human migrations in history,** accompanied by **communal riots** and **interreligious conflict.**
  - The legacy of the partition continues to influence the region, with ongoing tensions between India and Pakistan, especially over the contested **region of Kashmir.**

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UP Targets Five-Fold Growth in Tourism By 2028

Why in News?

According to the sources, the **Uttar Pradesh government** is **revitalizing tourist destinations and infrastructure,** with the goal of **increasing tourism fivefold by 2028.**

- The target is to achieve a **Gross Value Added (GVA) of ₹70,000 crore** and **attract 80 crore tourists.**

Key Points

- The state government has been concentrating on **revitalizing tourist destinations** and **enhancing transport infrastructure** over the past seven and a half years **to boost tourism in the state.**
  - This initiative has resulted in a substantial rise in tourist footfall, with over **48 crore visitors** opting to discover the captivating beauty of **Uttar Pradesh in 2023.**
- Tourism has surged in cities of spiritual importance, such as **Kashi**, **Ayodhya**, **Mathura**, **Chitrakoot**, **Prayagraj, Naimisharanya, and Gorakhpur.**
  - The government is improving top-notch infrastructure in these cities and motivating tourists to discover various destinations.
  - The **One District, One Product (ODOP) initiative** is vital in showcasing local products to travelers.
- The government is also concentrating on **increasing the accessibility of hotels, guest houses, and homestays.**
- Simultaneously, they are planning to **revitalize government-operated tourist and Rahi bungalows** to cater to the rising number of tourists.

One District One Product (ODOP) Initiative

- ODOP is an **initiative to boost economic growth at the district level** by promoting and branding one product from each district of the country.
  - The idea is to **leverage the local potential, resources, skills, and culture of each district and create a unique identity for them** in the domestic and international markets.
- The concept of ODOP was **first launched by the Uttar Pradesh government in January 2018.**
- **Over 1000 products have been selected from all 761 districts in the country.** The initiative covers a wide range of sectors, **including textiles, agriculture, processed goods, pharmaceuticals, and industrial items.**
- Also, multiple ODOP products were displayed at the **World Economic Forum** in January 2023 in the **Indian Pavilion at Davos in Switzerland.**

Uttar Pradesh to Launch Agriculture Business Project

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh government** is preparing to launch a **World Bank-funded agriculture business and entrepreneurship project** worth Rs 4,000 crore aimed at boosting rural income.

Key Points

- This initiative will benefit farmers, farm groups, and agro **micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs)** across 28 districts in eastern UP and the **Bundelkhand region.**
- The project is estimated to benefit a million farmers, including 30% of the rural women associated with agri **Self Help Groups (SHGs).**
  - As part of the project, financial assistance will be provided to 100,000 fisherfolk.
  - Additionally, 500 farmers will be sent on international tours for training in advanced farming techniques.
- The government also intends to invest in **high-yielding seed varieties** and farm infrastructure, develop a digital platform for the agricultural sector, and help farmers tap into the **carbon credit market** to boost their income.

Carbon Markets

- **Carbon markets** are essentially **a tool for putting a price on carbon emissions**— they establish trading systems where carbon credits or allowances can be bought and sold.

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- A carbon credit is a kind of **tradable permit that**, per United Nations standards, **equals one tonne of carbon dioxide removed**, reduced, or sequestered from the atmosphere.
- Carbon allowances or caps, meanwhile, are **determined by countries or governments** according to their emission reduction targets.
- Carbon trading started formally in 1997 under the United Nations' Kyoto Protocol.

Reactivation Of Anti-Romeo Squads in Uttar Pradesh

Why in News?

Recently, **Uttar Pradesh** Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath instructed the **reactivation of the Anti-Romeo Squad teams.**

Key Points

- The Chief Minister emphasized the need for a **fear-free environment** and prioritized women's safety, directing district-level officers to ensure public hearings and communication.
- **Anti-Romeo Squad:**
  - They were meant to **curb eve-teasing and provide greater security to women.**
  - It aims to **take action against boys** found outside girls' colleges **involved in eve-teasing and molesting** girl students.
  - But couples were stopped just for being spotted together, though the squad had no legal jurisdiction to stop them.

NGT Imposes Fine for Dumping Solid Waste

Why in News?

Recently, The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has enforced a total ban on littering or dumping solid waste **in unauthorized areas** of Uttar Pradesh, with fines for violations ranging from Rs. 5,000 to Rs. 50,000.

Key Points

- According to the court, the violator shall be liable to pay an environmental **compensation of Rs. 5,000 for the first instance and Rs.10,000 for further instances** of littering or dumping of solid waste.
  - If a **bulk waste generator**, concessionaire, urban local body, or any other individual is caught littering or dumping waste in bulk, a **fine of Rs. 25,000** will be imposed **for the first offense, and Rs. 50,000 for any subsequent offenses.**
- The NGT passed the order on a petition on garbage being dumped on the embankment of the **Rapti river** causing water pollution.

National Green Tribunal (NGT)

- It is a **specialised body set up under the** National Green Tribunal Act, 2010 for effective and expeditious disposal of **cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources.**
- With the establishment of the NGT, **India became the third country in the world to set up a specialised environmental tribunal**, only after Australia and New Zealand, and the first developing country to do so.
- NGT is mandated to make disposal of applications or appeals finally within 6 months of filing the same.
- The NGT has five places of sittings, **New Delhi is the Principal place of sitting** and Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata and Chennai are the other four.

Ayodhya Becomes A Model Solar City

Why in News?

Recently, The Uttar Pradesh has **achieved a 40 MW power generation capacity** through a solar energy plant in **Ayodhya.**

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- Due to which **Ayodhya achieved** the prestigious designation of a **model solar city** under the **Uttar Pradesh Solar Energy Policy 2022**.

Key Points

- According to this policy, a **solar city is defined as one where renewable energy plants can reduce the estimated total demand for conventional energy by at least 10%.**
  - Ayodhya has surpassed this benchmark, **achieving double the required capacity**.
- The plant was set up by **National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) Green Energy Limited** near the **Saryu River** in the villages of Majha Rampur Halwara and Majha Sarairasi.
  - The **state government has leased 165.10 acres of land to NTPC** Green Energy Limited **for 30 years at the nominal rate of Rs 1 per acre per year** to establish a solar power plant project.
  - This plant will be purchased by **Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL) for 25 years at a cost-plus-determined tariff**, leading to Ayodhya being declared a model solar city.

Saryu River

- The Saryu is a river **that flows through Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.**
- This **river is of ancient significance as it is mentioned in the Vedas and the Ramayana.**
- The river is **formed at the confluence of rivers Karnali and Mahakali.** It is a tributary of River Ganges.
- On **Ram Navami**, the festival that celebrates the birthday of Lord Rama, **thousands of people take a dip in the Saryu River at Ayodhya.**

Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL)

- **Established on 14th January 2000**, as the result of power sector reforms and restructuring in UP which is the **focal point of the Power Sector**, responsible for planning and managing the sector through its **transmission, distribution and supply of electricity.**
- It is a professionally managed utility supplying reliable and cost efficient electricity to every citizen of the state.

Uttar Pradesh Gets Permission for New Medical Colleges

Why in News?

Recently, the **National Medical Commission (NMC)** granted permission to **seven new medical colleges** and **increased seats** in two existing colleges in **Uttar Pradesh.**

Key Points

- Permission has been issued for the autonomous state medical colleges in **Bijnor, Bulandshahr, Kushinagar, Pilibhit, Sultanpur, Kanpur Dehat and Lalitpur** collectively having **600 MBBS seats**.
  - Additionally, the government medical colleges in Agra and Meerut have had their seat counts increased by 72 and 50 bringing the total to **200 seats at the Agra Medical College and 150 seats at the Meerut Medical College.**

National Medical Commission (NMC)

- NMC is the **apex regulatory body for medical education and practice in India.**
- It was **established in 2020** by the **National Medical Commission Act, 2019, replacing the Medical Council of India (MCI).**
- It consists of four autonomous boards: the Under-Graduate Medical Education Board, the Post-Graduate Medical Education Board, the Medical Assessment and Rating Board, and the Ethics and Medical Registration Board.
  - NMC also has a Medical Advisory Council, which advises the commission on matters related to medical education and practice.
- NMC is responsible for conducting and overseeing major screening tests, such as NEET-UG, NEET-PG, and FMGE.
- It also regulates the **standards and quality of medical education and training**, the registration and ethics of medical practitioners, and the assessment and rating of medical institutions.
- NMC has also achieved the prestigious **World Federation for Medical Education (WFME)** recognition, which means that the medical degrees awarded by the NMC are recognized globally.

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- The WFME was founded in 1972 by the World Medical Association, the World Health Organization, and other organizations.

Uttar Pradesh Assembly Passes 'Love Jihad' Law

Why in News?

Recently, The Uttar Pradesh Assembly passed the UP Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion (Amendment) Bill, 2024, providing for a **maximum punishment of life imprisonment** to the offenders convicted under certain circumstances.

Key Points

- The law contains **stringent provisions with regard to fraudulent or forced conversions.**
- It provides for **20 years' imprisonment or life sentence** if it was found that conversion had taken place under **threat, promise of marriage or conspiracy.** It was placed in the category of **most serious crime** under the Bill.
  - The bill allows **any person to register an First Information Report (FIR) in cases related to religious conversion**, not only parents, victims, or siblings.
- These cases would not be heard by any court below the sessions court. Bill has also made the crime **non-bailable.**
  - Anyone wishing to convert of their own volition for the purpose of marriage must submit an application to the concerned district magistrate two months in advance.

State Anti-Conversion Laws

- **Odisha (1967):** First State to enact a law restricting religious conversions, prohibiting forceful conversions and fraudulent means.
- **Madhya Pradesh (1968):** Introduced the Madhya Pradesh Dharma Swatantraya Adhiniyam, requiring notification to the District Magistrate for any conversion activities under penalty of law.
- Arunachal Pradesh (1978), Gujarat (2003), Chhattisgarh (2000 and 2006), Rajasthan (2006 and 2008), Himachal Pradesh (2006 and 2019), Tamil Nadu (2002-2004), Jharkhand (2017), Uttarakhand (2018), Uttar Pradesh (2021), and Haryana (2022).
  - These states have enacted laws prohibiting various forms of religious conversions, with enhanced penalties for conversions involving SCs, STs, minors, and women.
- **Centre's Stand:** The Union Ministry of Home Affairs stated in an affidavit to the Supreme Court that the **right to religion does not include the right to convert others, especially through fraudulent or coercive means.**
  - They referred to the Supreme Court's interpretation of Article 25 and emphasised that fraudulent conversion affects an individual's freedom of conscience and can disrupt public order.
  - The Centre has not clarified if it will introduce a special law on religious conversions as requested in the petition.

Uttar Pradesh to Set Up Logistics Clusters

Why in News?

Recently, The **Uttar Pradesh government** has initiated the establishment of 33 **Integrated Manufacturing and Logistics Clusters (IMLCs)** along expressways in 30 districts.

Key Points

- IMLCs will be established along **five major expressways**: Ganga, Bundelkhand, Agra-Lucknow, Gorakhpur Link, and Purvanchal.
  - Additional land will be allocated for the defence corridor in Agra and Aligarh along the Agra-Lucknow expressway. Industrial corridors will be developed as IMLCs in Firozabad, Etawah, and Kannauj.

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- Environmental and forest clearances are required for all scheduled projects, Uttar Pradesh Expressways Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA) has initiated a **Request for Proposal (RFP)** process to select a consulting agency.

The Uttar Pradesh Expressways Industrial Development Authority (UPEIDA)

- It is an **authority set up in 2007 by the Government of Uttar Pradesh to develop expressway projects in the state.**
- The headquarters of UPEIDA is **located at Paryatan Bhawan in Gomti Nagar, Lucknow.**

Heavy Rain Alert in Uttar Pradesh

Why in News?

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued an important weather warning for Uttar Pradesh, placing various districts under **Yellow** and **Orange alerts.**

- This alert is primarily due to a **low-pressure area** over the northwest Bay of Bengal, which has intensified into a **cyclonic circulation** currently affecting Uttar Pradesh.

Key Points

- **Districts Under Heavy Rain Alert:** A total of **24 districts** are under a **heavy rain alert**. These include: Banda, Chitrakoot, Kaushambi, Prayagraj, Deoria, Gorakhpur, Bahraich, Lakhimpur Kheri, Sitapur, Ayodhya, Ambedkar Nagar, Jalaun, Hamirpur, Mahoba, Jhansi, Lalitpur,
  - In these districts, the **IMD** has issued a **yellow alert,** indicating the possibility of heavy rainfall.
- **Districts Under Very Heavy Rain Alert:** Eight districts are under an **orange alert** for **very heavy rainfall**. These districts are Sant Kabir Nagar, Basti, Kushinagar, Maharajganj, Siddharthnagar, Gonda, Balrampur, Shravasti.
  - Residents in these areas should be prepared for extremely heavy rainfall and potential disruptions.

Colour- Coded Weather Warning

- It is issued by the **IMD** whose objective is to alert people **ahead of severe** or **hazardous weather** which has the potential to **cause damage, widespread disruption** or danger to life.
- **The IMD uses 4 color codes are:**
  - **Green (All is well):** No advisory is issued.
  - **Yellow (Be Aware):** Yellow indicates severely bad weather spanning across several days. It also suggests that the weather could change for the worse, causing disruption in day-to-day activities.
  - **Orange/Amber (Be prepared):** The **orange alert** is issued as a warning of extremely bad weather with the potential of disruption in commute with road and rail closures, and interruption of power supply.
  - **Red (Take Action):** When the extremely bad weather conditions are certainly going to disrupt travel and power and have significant risk to life, the **red alert** is issued.
- These alerts are **universal in nature** and are also issued during **floods**, depending on the amount of **water rising above land/in a river** as a result of **torrential rainfall**.
  - For instance, when the water in a river is **'above normal'** level, or between the **'warning'** and **'danger'** levels, a **yellow alert** is issued.

Crack Down on Food Adulteration

Why in News?

Recently, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister issued new directives to combat food adulteration in the state.

Key Points

- **Display of Proprietors' Names**:
  - All restaurants and eateries must prominently display the names and addresses of their operators, proprietors, managers, and other key staff.

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- The move is aimed at ensuring transparency and accountability in food establishments.

- **Amendment to Food Safety Act**:
  - Amendments to the **Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006** will be made to enforce compliance with the new display rules.
  - A state-wide verification campaign will be conducted, involving the Food Safety and Drug Administration, Police, and Local Administration.
- **Mandatory CCTV Installation**:
  - All eateries, hotels, and dhabas must install **CCTV cameras** covering both dining areas and other sections of the establishment.
  - Operators are responsible for securely storing CCTV footage and providing it to law enforcement upon request.
- **Public Health and Hygiene**:
  - The directives are part of the state's response to food adulteration cases where human waste and other contaminants were found in food.
  - Strict hygiene practices will be enforced, including mandatory use of masks and gloves for all food preparation and serving staff.

FSSAI

- The **Food Safety and Standards Act (FSSAI)**, established in **2006**, serves as India's primary legislation for regulating food safety. It sets standards for food products and oversees their **manufacture, storage, distribution, sale,** and **import**. The Act aims to ensure the availability of safe and wholesome food for consumers.
- **Key features of the FSSAI Act, 2006 :**
  - **Unified Food Laws**: It consolidates multiple food laws into one unified system, establishing clear standards for food safety and quality.
  - **Powers to State Governments**: The Act allows **state governments** to frame rules and take measures to regulate food safety at the local level, such as conducting inspections, ensuring compliance, and initiating actions against violations.
  - **Food Safety Authority**: The **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** was created under this Act to set food standards, conduct food safety audits, and promote safe food practices.
- The Act empowers both **central and state authorities** to maintain strict vigilance on food safety and take action in case of non-compliance, such as the recent directives issued by Uttar Pradesh to address food adulteration concerns.

Semiconductor Facility in UP

Why in News?

Recently, it was announced that **Uttar Pradesh** is set to have its first **semiconductor manufacturing unit**, marking a significant development in India's tech sector and positioning the state as a critical player in the country's **digital transformation.**

Key Points

- **India-US Semiconductor Partnership**:
  - The announcement follows a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** signed between India and the US to collaborate on **chip manufacturing**.
  - The **India-US partnership** in semiconductor development will have a far-reaching impact on India's technological advancements.
- **Importance for Digital Transformation**:
  - Semiconductors are critical for India's **digital transformation goals** and will become increasingly visible in daily life.
  - This development is part of a broader initiative to **leverage technology** for India's progress, extending its benefits to **rural and interior areas**.
- **Cybersecurity Focus**:
  - The semiconductor industry is also seen as crucial for strengthening **cybersecurity**, given the shift in warfare from physical attacks to the **cyber realm**.

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- **Economic Impact**:
  - The establishment of this facility will contribute to **macroeconomic growth**, with India's economy being described as **resilient** and on a strong growth trajectory.
  - The **Indo-US bilateral ties** are now mutually beneficial, contributing to India's ongoing economic development.

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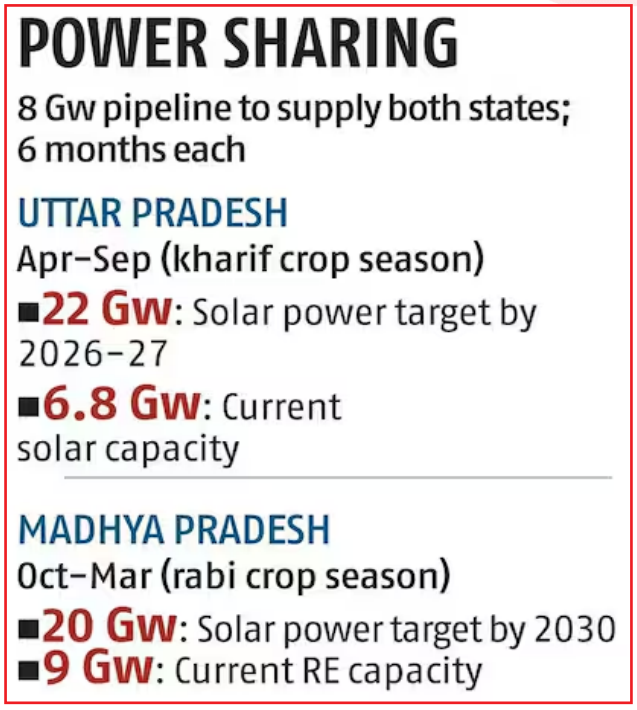
UP and MP Collaborate on 8 GW Solar Power Projects

Why in News?

Recently, Madhya Pradesh (MP) and Uttar Pradesh (UP) governments have partnered to develop **8 gigawatts** (GW) of **solar power plants**, marking a significant first-of-its-kind **renewable energy** collaboration between two Indian states.

Key Points

- **Collaboration Overview:**
  - The power generated will be shared between the two states, **alternating every six months,** aligning with their respective peak demand seasons.
  - **Madhya Pradesh:** Peak demand occurs from **October to March,** coinciding with the rabi crop season.
  - **Uttar Pradesh**: Peak demand occurs between **April and September**, aligning with the kharif crop season.
  - Solar power will be distributed based on these seasonal demand patterns.



- **Project Phases and Development:**
  - In the first phase, a **2 GW project will be developed, with Morena (MP)** identified as a possible site.
- **State Renewable Energy Goals:**
  - **Madhya Pradesh:** Aims to achieve **20 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030, up from its current 9 GW.**
  - **Uttar Pradesh:** Targets **22 GW of solar capacity by 2026-27,** up from its current **6.8 GW.**

97% SC Atrocities from 13 States

Why in News?

Recently, a government report revealed that **97.7% of atrocities against Scheduled Castes (SCs) in 2022** were concentrated in 13 states, with **Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Madhya Pradesh** recording the highest number of such cases.

Key Points

- **Atrocities Against Scheduled Castes (SCs) in 2022:**
  - 97.7% of all atrocities against SCs (51,656 out of 52,866 cases) were reported from 13 states.
  - Uttar Pradesh reported the highest number of cases (12,287 or 23.78%).
- **Atrocities Against Scheduled Tribes (STs) in 2022:**
  - 98.91% of all atrocities against STs were reported from 13 states (9,735 cases total).
  - Madhya Pradesh had the highest number of cases (2,979 or 30.61%).
  - Rajasthan followed with 2,498 cases (25.66%) and Odisha recorded 773 cases (7.94%).
- **Conviction Rate:**
  - The conviction rate for cases under the **SC/ST Act, 1989** declined to 32.4% in 2022, down from 39.2% in 2020.
- **SC/ST Protection Measures:**
  - SC/ST protection cells have been set up in states like Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat,

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Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and others.

- Special police stations for handling SC/ST offences are established in Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Kerala, and Madhya Pradesh.

Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989:

- SC ST Act, 1989 is an Act of Parliament enacted to prohibit discrimination against SC & ST communities members and prevent atrocities against them.
- The Act is also a recognition of the depressing reality that despite undertaking several measures, the Scheduled Castes/ Scheduled Tribes continue to be subjected to various atrocities at the hands of upper-castes.
- The Act has been enacted keeping in view the express constitutional safeguards enumerated in Articles 15 (Prohibition of Discrimination), 17 (Abolition of Untouchability) and 21 (Protection of Life and Personal Liberty) of the Constitution, with a twin-fold objective of protecting the members of these vulnerable communities as well as to provide relief and rehabilitation to the victims of caste-based atrocities.
- In the amended **SC/ST Act, 2018** preliminary inquiry is not a must and no prior approval is also required for appointing authorities for senior police officers to file FIRs in cases of atrocities on SC and ST.

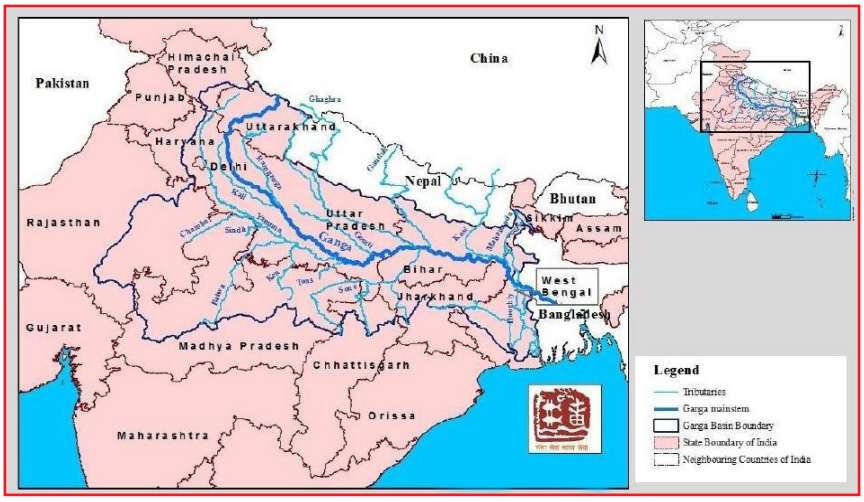
Flooding in Saryu River

Why in News?

Recently, flooding in the Saryu River caused severe disruptions in Uttar Pradesh's Ballia district, affecting transportation and local communities.

Key Points

- **Saryu River:**
  - The Saryu is a river that flows through **Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.**
  - This river is of ancient significance as it is mentioned in the Vedas and the Ramayana.
  - The river is formed at the confluence of rivers Karnali and Mahakali. It is a tributary of River Ganges.
- **Ballia District:**
  - Ballia is located in the extreme north-eastern part of Uttar Pradesh, bordered by **Mau, Deoria, Bihar, and Ghazipur**, and lies at the confluence of the **Ganges and** Ghagra rivers.
  - The city is 135 kilometers away from Varanasi, with the Ganges separating **Ballia from Bihar, and the Ghagra separating it from Deoria**.
  - One belief is that the city is named after the sage Valmiki, who is thought to have resided there, though his shrine no longer exists.
  - Another belief links the name to the local soil, **"Ballua" (sandy soil),** with the city's original name being "Balian," later transformed into "Ballia."



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Madrasas's Education

Why in News?

Recently, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) highlighted concerns about madrasa education in India, citing non-compliance with the Right to Education Act, 2009.

Key Points

- **NCPCR Concerns:** NCPCR informed the Supreme Court that madrasa education is not comprehensive and does not comply with the **Right to Education Act (RTE), 2009** provisions.
  - Textbooks used in madrasas reportedly promote the **"supremacy of Islam,"** conflicting with secular **educational principles** and **RTE requirements.**
- **High Court Ruling:**The Allahabad High Court declared the Uttar Pradesh Board of Madarsa Education Act, 2004 **"unconstitutional."**
  - The Act was found to violate "the principle of secularism" and fundamental rights under Article 14 of the Constitution.
- **Madrasas:** Madrasa is an Arabic word for an educational institution.
  - Initially, mosques served as educational institutions in early Islam, but by the 10th century, madrasas evolved into distinct entities for both religious and secular learning in the Islamic world.
  - The earliest madrasas were found in Khorasan **and Transoxania (modern eastern and northern Iran, central Asia, and Afghanistan)**, with larger institutions providing housing for students, especially those from poor backgrounds.
  - As of **2018-19**, India had **24,010 madrasas: 19,132 recognized and 4,878 unrecognized.**
  - Recognized madrasas are **under state boards**; unrecognized ones follow curricula from major seminaries **like** Darul Uloom Nadwatul Ulama and Darul Uloom Deoband.
  - **Uttar Pradesh** has **60%** of the country's madrasas.11,621 recognized and 2,907 unrecognized madrasas.
- **Categories of Madrasas in India:**
  - **Madrasa Darse Nizami:** Operated as public charities and are not required to follow state school education curricula.
  - **Madrasa Darse Aliya:** Affiliated with state madrasa education boards (e.g., Uttar Pradesh Board of Madrasa Education).
    - Governed by state governments, with teachers and officials appointed by them.
    - Approximately **1.69 lakh students appeared** for UP madrasa board exams (equivalent to Class 10 and Class 12) in 2023.
- **Funding for Madrasas:** Bulk of the funding comes from respective state governments.
  - **Central Government Scheme:**Scheme for Providing Education to Madrasas/Minorities (SPEMM) provides financial assistance to madrasas and minority institutions.
    - **Sub-schemes under SPEMM:**
      - Scheme for Providing Quality Education in Madrasas (SPQEM).
      - Infrastructure Development of Minority Institutes (IDMI).
  - SPEMM was transferred from the Ministry of Minority Affairs to the Ministry of Education in April 2021.

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights

- NCPCR is a statutory body set up in March 2007 under the Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005.
- It is under the administrative control of the **Ministry of Women & Child Development**.
- The Commission's mandate is to ensure that all laws, policies, programs, and administrative mechanisms are in consonance with the child rights perspective as enshrined in the Constitution of India and also the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.**
- It inquiries into complaints relating to a child's right to free and compulsory education under the **Right to Education Act, 2009.**
- It monitors the implementation of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012.

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Economic Trajectory

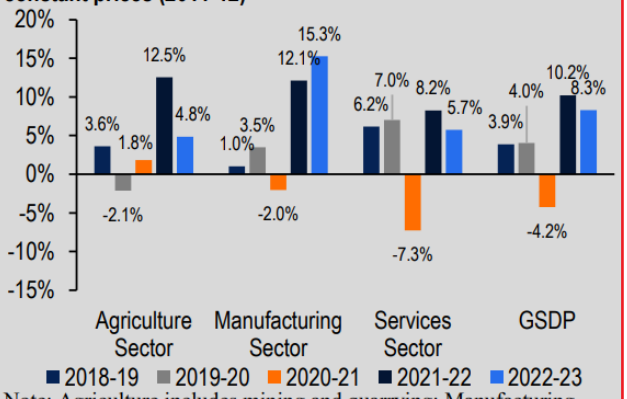
Why in News?

Recently, the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM) report revealed the economic dominance of five states in India during the 1960s.

Key Points

- In the 1960s, five states, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Bihar, accounted for approximately 54% of India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- **Uttar Pradesh (then undivided)** was the largest economic contributor among these states, **contributing 14.4%** of India's total GDP.
- **Uttar Pradesh's Economy:**
  - Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) Growth:
    - In 2022-23, Uttar Pradesh's GSDP (at constant prices) grew by 8.3%, down from 10.2% in 2021-22.
    - National GDP is estimated to grow at 7.2% in 2022-23.
  - **Sectoral Growth:**
    - **Agriculture sector:** Grew by 10% in 2022-23 (at current prices), compared to 14% in 2021-22 (growth in 2021-22 was over a low base).
    - **Manufacturing sector:** Grew by 22% in 2022-23.
    - **Services sector:** Grew by 12% in 2022-23.
    - **Contributions to the economy (at constant prices):** Agriculture (24%), Manufacturing (30%), Services (46%).
  - **Per Capita GSDP:**
    - Estimated at **Rs 96,193 in 2022-23** (at current prices), with an annual growth of **8% since 2017-18.**
- **The GSDP growth rates at constant prices of 2011-12 were:** 4.7% (2012-13), 5.8% (2013-14), 4.0% (2014-15), 8.8% (2015-16), 11.4% (2016-17), 4.6% (2017-18), 6.3% (2018-19), 3.8% (2019-20), -5.5% (2020-21), and 4.2% (2021-22).
- **Share of UP in National GDP**: The share of Uttar Pradesh (UP) in the national GDP is either constant or declining. For a trillion-dollar economy, UP's share should increase to 20%.
  - The GDP of India at current prices increased from Rs.153.92 lakh crore in 2016-17 to Rs.236.64 lakh crore in 2021-22.
  - The share of Uttar Pradesh (UP) in India's GDP declined from 8.4% in 2016-17 to 7.9% in 2021-22.

Figure 1: Growth in GSDP and sectors in Uttar Pradesh at constant prices (2011-12)



Note: Agriculture includes mining and quarrying; Manufacturing includes construction and electricity. These numbers are as per constant prices (2011-12) which implies that the growth rate is adjusted for inflation.

- **Widening Per Capita Income Gap**: The gap between per capita income of India and UP has widened over the years. In 2011-12, UP's per capita income was about 50% of India's, but by 2021-22, it had decreased to **45.87%**. This indicates that UP has not kept pace with national economic growth.
- **The projected GSDP in 2026-27 under alternative growth scenarios arranged in points:**
  - **Very High (CAGR = 20%)**: Rs.42.5 lakh crore
  - **High (CAGR = 15%)**: Rs.35.8 lakh crore
  - **Moderate (CAGR = 12%)**: Rs.32.2 lakh crore
  - **Normal (CAGR = 10%)**: Rs.30 lakh crore

Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (EAC-PM)

- It is an **non-constitutional, non-statutory, independent body** constituted to give advice on economic and related issues to the Government of India, specifically to the Prime Minister.

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- The council serves to **highlight key economic issues** to the government of India from a neutral viewpoint.
  - It advises the Prime Minister on economic issues like **inflation**, **microfinance**, **and industrial output**.
- For administrative, logistic, planning and budgeting purposes, the **NITI Aayog** serves as the **Nodal Agency for the EAC-PM.**
- **Periodic Reports:**
  - Annual Economic Outlook.
  - Review of the Economy.

Ganga Crosses Warning Mark in Kashi

Why in News?

The **Ganga River** in Varanasi has surpassed the **warning level,** causing significant flooding and affecting over **4,000 residents** in the region.

- The water level rose to 70.76 meters, surpassing the warning threshold of 70.26 meters; increasing at a rate of 5 cm per hour.

Key Points

- **Impact on Residents:**
  - **Affected Population:** A total of 4,461 people have been impacted by the floods. Several low-lying areas in the district are now submerged, forcing residents to use boats for commuting.
  - **Relocation:** Families from Mokalpur affected by erosion have been relocated to relief camps. Additionally, 1,601 people from 299 families are currently residing in these camps.
- **Relief Measures:**
  - **Flood Relief Camps:** The district administration has set up **46 flood relief camps,** with 14 currently operational.
    - These camps provide essential supplies such as **food, fruits, milk,** and **drinking water**. Medical camps have also been established to offer healthcare services.
  - **Rescue Operations:** A total of **22 boats** have been deployed for rescue operations.
    - Teams from the **National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)** are actively involved in relief efforts using motorboats.

Ganga River System

- The Ganga originates as **Bhagirathi** from **Gangotri Glacier**, Uttarakhand at an elevation of 3,892 m.
- Many small streams comprise the headwaters of the Ganga. The important among these are **Alaknanda, Dhauliganga**, **Pindar**, **Mandakini** and **Bhilangana**.
  - At **Devprayag**, where **Alaknanda** joins **Bhagirathi**, the river acquires the name Ganga. It traverses **2525 km** before flowing into the **Bay of Bengal**.
- The Ganga is formed from the **6 headstreams** and their **five confluences**.
  - **Devprayag:** Confluence of Bhagirathi river and Alaknanda river.
  - **Rudraprayag:** Confluence of Mandakini river and Alaknanda river.
  - **Nandaprayag:** Confluence of Nandakini river and Alaknanda river.
  - **Karnaprayag:** Confluence of Pindar river and Alaknanda river.
  - **Vishnuprayag:** Confluence of Dhauliganga river and Alaknanda river.
- The Bhagirathi, considered to be the source stream, rises at the foot of **Gangotri Glacier,** at **Gaumukh.** It finally empties into the Bay of Bengal.
- **Major Tributaries of the Ganga River:**
  - **Left Bank Tributaries:** Ramganga, Gomti, Ghaghara, Gandak, Burhi Gandak, Koshi, Mahananda.
  - **Right Bank Tributaries:** Yamuna, Tons, Karamnasa, Sone, Punpun, Falgu, Kiul, Chandan, Ajoy, Damodar, Rupnarayan.
- The **Ganges River** flows through **28 districts** in **Uttar Pradesh,** entering the state from **Bijnor**. It traverses approximately **1140 kilometers** within **Uttar Pradesh** before merging with the **Yamuna** at the **Triveni Sangam** in **Prayagraj.**

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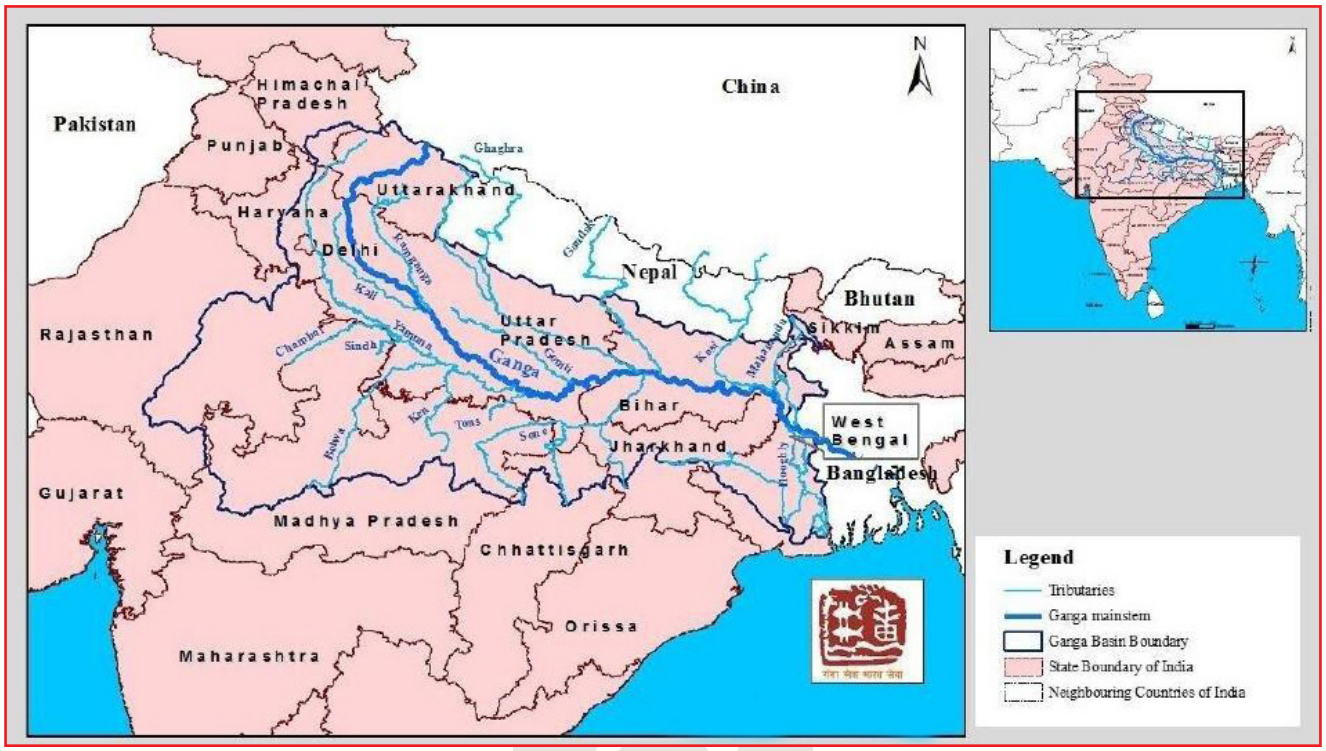

Bulldozer Justice

Why in News?

Recently, the **Supreme Court of India (SC)** criticized the practice of **"bulldozer justice,"** highlighting that demolishing properties based on criminal allegations against individuals or their family members violates the **rule of law.**

Key Points

- "Bulldozer justice" refers to the practice of **demolishing the property** of individuals suspected of criminal activities or involvement in riots using bulldozers, often without adhering to **due legal process**.
  - This practice has been reported in several Indian states, including Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Assam, and Maharashtra.
  - Demolitions are often **justified under municipal laws** for encroachment or **unauthorized construction.**
- This practice bypasses **due process requirements** outlined in Supreme Court judgments such as ***Sudama Singh & Ors. vs Government of Delhi*** and ***Ajay Maken & Ors vs Union of India.***
- The SC has recently condemned this practice, emphasizing that demolishing properties based on accusations **violates the rule of law** and **due process of law.**
  - The SC has invited suggestions from the parties concerned to frame appropriate pan-India guidelines on extra-legal demolitions.
- An analysis has identified that **procedural guidelines** should be incorporated into **relevant legislation and rules,** structured in a phased manner with multiple checkpoints at each stage to ensure **all necessary steps are followed** before taking any adverse or irreversible actions.

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- **Pre-Demolition Phase:**
  - **Burden of Proof**: Shift the burden of proof to the authorities to justify demolition and displacement, ensuring protection of human rights.
  - **Notice and Publicity:** Provide a reasoned notice with information about land records and resettlement plans, and give ample time for affected individuals to respond.
  - **Independent Review:** An independent committee with judicial and civil society representatives should review proposed demolitions, particularly in neighborhoods.
  - **Engagement and Planning:** Engage affected individuals in discussions about alternative housing and compensation, addressing the needs of vulnerable groups. Allow a minimum of one month between notice and demolition.
- **During Demolition:**
  - **Minimization of Force:** Avoid the use of physical force and heavy machinery such as bulldozers.
  - **Official Presence:** Ensure the presence of government officials not involved in the demolition to oversee the process.
  - **Scheduled Timing:** Demolition times should be pre-decided to prevent surprise actions.
- **Post-Demolition (Rehabilitation):**
  - **Rehabilitation:** Provide adequate temporary or permanent housing solutions to ensure no one is left homeless.
  - **Grievance Redressal:** Establish a speedy grievance redress mechanism for affected individuals to challenge demolition decisions.
  - **Remedies:** Ensure remedies such as compensation, restitution, and possible return to original homes.

Atal Residential Schools

Why in News?

Recently, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister announced a major expansion of Atal Residential Schools to enhance educational opportunities **for underprivileged students.**

Key Points

- Currently, there are **18 Atal Residential Schools**.
  - The expansion will be in phases, with schools planned for **57 districts** in the next academic session, extending to **350 tehsils** in the third phase, **825 development blocks** in the fourth phase, and Nyay panchayat level in the fifth phase.
- **School Features:**
  - Named after former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, the schools are designed **to set a benchmark for inclusive education** and to **combat illiteracy** and deprivation.
  - The new schools will cater to students from **classes 1 to 12** and include **Bal Vatikas.**
  - Schools are directed to hold biannual meetings with parents to keep them informed.

Bal Vatikas

- Bal Vatika is an **early childhood education program** that aims to help children aged **3–6 years** develop cognitively, socially, emotionally, and physically.
- The program focuses **on play-based learning** and is designed to create an **inclusive and welcoming environment** for children.

Nyay Panchayat

- A Nyaya Panchayat is a judicial system in the **panchayati raj system of India** that resolves disputes **at the village level**. Nyaya Panchayats are considered the most basic level of the Indian judicial system.
- **Some of the functions of Nyaya Panchayats include:**
  - **Resolving disputes:** Nyaya Panchayats resolve minor civil and criminal disputes.
  - **Providing justice**: Nyaya Panchayats provide low-cost and quick justice.
  - **Punishing offenders:** Nyaya Panchayats can raise small fines and punish offenders. However, they do not imprison people.
  - **Decentralizing democracy:** Nyaya Panchayats help to decentralize the democratic system.

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NIA Court Awards Life Imprisonment in Conversion Case

Why in News?

Recently, a special National Investigation Agency (NIA) court in Lucknow sentenced Islamic scholar and 11 others to life imprisonment in an illegal religious conversion case.

Key Points

- **Charges and Convictions:**
  - The convicts were charged under **Section 121A (conspiring to commit certain offences against the state), Section 123 (concealing with intent to facilitate a design to wage war), Section 153A (promoting enmity between different groups based on religion)**, of the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, 2021.
- **Arrest and Allegations:**
  - Islamic Scholar was arrested in 2021 by the Uttar Pradesh Anti-Terrorism Squad from Meerut for allegedly running a **nationwide** syndicate for **illegal religious conversion.**
    - He was accused of promoting enmity, disturbing India's sovereignty and integrity, and receiving **funds from international organisations** to facilitate conversions.

National Investigation Agency (NIA)

- 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**

Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, 2021

- The law contains stringent provisions with regard to fraudulent or forced conversions.
- It provides for **20 years' imprisonment or life sentence** if it was found that conversion had taken place under threat, promise of marriage or conspiracy. It was placed in the category of most serious crime under the Bill.
  - The bill allows **any person to register** an First Information Report (FIR) in cases related to religious conversion, not only parents, victims, or siblings.
- These cases would not be heard by any court below the sessions court. Bill has also made the crime non-bailable.
  - Anyone wishing to convert of their own volition for the purpose of marriage must submit an application to the concerned district magistrate two months in advance.

UP Aims for Investment in Secure Data Storage

Why in News?

Recently, the Uttar Pradesh government has targeted a Rs.30,000 crore investment to boost secure data storage by establishing data centers.

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Key Points

- **Investment Target:** Uttar Pradesh aims to attract private players to set up 8 data centers with a total investment of **Rs.30,000 crore.**
  - The data centers will have a combined capacity of **900 MW** and will be located near Noida.
  - Companies like Hiranandani Group, Adani Group, NTT Japan, and Web Werks have launched or announced projects worth **Rs. 20,000 crore, adding 600 MW** capacity.
  - The state has allowed data centers to draw power from **two grids** for uninterrupted supply.
    - UP's amended Data Centre Policy now extends the **double-grid supply to 8 data** center parks to attract more investment.
- **Significance:**
  - Data centers centralise IT activities for storing, processing, and sharing information.
    - India's colocation data center capacity was **977 MW** across top 7 cities in 2023, with an additional **1.7-3.6 GW needed by 2028** due to rapid digital adoption.
  - Offshore data storage raises security risks, exposing sensitive information (banking, social media, health, etc.) to cyberattacks.
    - Domestic data centers will ensure enhanced security for India's growing digital data.
- **National Data Centre Capacity:**
  - India's under-construction colocation capacity for **2024-2028 stands at 1.03 GW,** providing businesses with secure server infrastructure and high-speed network connectivity.

Uttar Pradesh Data Centre Policy 2021

- **Capital Subsidy:** 7% up to Rs.10 crore for units over 10 years (excluding land & building).
- **Interest Subsidy:** 60% of annual interest, up to Rs.50 crore for 7 years for data center parks.
- **Land Subsidy:** 25-50% on sector rates, capped at Rs.75 crore.
- **Stamp Duty Exemption:** 100% on first transaction; 50% on second.
- **Electricity Benefits:** 100% duty exemption for 10 years; dual-grid power for the first 3 parks.

Govind Ballabh Pant

Why in News?

On the 137th birth anniversary of first Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh **Govind Ballabh Pant** is remembered as one of the country's most prominent freedom fighters and an administrator who played a key role in shaping modern India.

Key Points

- **Brief Profile:**
  - Govind Ballabh Pant is remembered as one of the country's most prominent freedom fighters and an administrator who played a key role in shaping modern India.
  - He was the **Premier of United Provinces (1937 - 1939), First Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh (1946 -1954)** and **Union Home Minister (1955 - 1961)** and was a recipient of the highest civilian award, the Bharat Ratna in 1957.
- **Early Life:**
  - Pant was born on 10th September 1887 in Uttarakhand, at Almora.
  - When he was 18 years old, he started serving as a volunteer at sessions of the Indian National Congress, looking up to Gopalkrishna Gokhale and Madan Mohan Malaviya as his idols.
  - In 1907, he decided to study law, after receiving his degree, he started to practise law in Almora in 1910 and eventually moved to Kashipur.
  - In Kashipur, he established an organisation called Prem Sabha, that started working towards several reforms and also saved a school from shutting down due to non-payment of taxes to the British government.
- **Contribution in National Movement:**
  - Govind Ballabh Pant joined the Congress in December 1921 and soon joined the non-cooperation movement.
  - In 1930, he was imprisoned for organizing a Salt March inspired by Gandhi's earlier actions.

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- He was elected to the Uttar Pradesh (then known as United Provinces) Legislative Assembly as the candidate of the Swarajist Party from Nainital.
- He tried to bring in reforms to do away with the Zamindari system.
- He also pleaded to the Government for lowering agricultural taxes on farmers.
- He encouraged many cottage industries in the country and raised his voice against the coolie-beggar law, which forced porters to transport the heavy luggage of British officials without any payment.
- Pant was always against a separate electorate for minorities, saying the step would further divide communities.
- During the Second World War, Pant tried to conciliate between Gandhi's faction, which advocated supporting the British Crown in their war effort, and Subash Chandra Bose's faction, which advocated taking advantage of the situation to expel the British Raj by any means necessary.
- In 1942 he was arrested again, this time for signing the Quit India resolution, and spent three years in Ahmednagar Fort along with other members of the Congress working committee until March 1945.
- Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru pleaded successfully for Pant's release, on grounds of failing health.

Post Independence

- After independence, Govind Ballabh Pant became the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. He worked for the upliftment of the farmers and the eradication of untouchability.
- After the death of Sardar Patel, Govind Ballabh Pant was made the Home Minister in the Union Government.
- As a Home Minister, he championed the cause of Hindi as the national language or rashtrabhasha.

Gorakhpur Sainik School Inaugurated

Why in News?

Recently, the Vice President inaugurated the Gorakhpur Sainik School, praising its facilities and highlighting its importance for education in **eastern Uttar Pradesh**.

Key Points

Gorakhpur Sainik School Details:

- 1st Sainik School in Eastern Uttar Pradesh.
- 2nd Sainik School managed by the **Uttar Pradesh Sainik School Society.**
- 5th Sainik School in Uttar Pradesh; others are in Jhansi, **Amethi, Mainpuri** (run by Defence Ministry) and **Lucknow** (run by Uttar Pradesh government).

The Vice President also visited **Gorakhdham temple in Gorakhpur**.

- The Gorakhdham Temple in Gorakhpur is dedicated to Guru Gorakshanath, a prominent saint of the Nath sect, and serves as a major pilgrimage site and spiritual center.
- The temple features traditional Hindu architectural elements with a prominent **central dome and detailed interiors**.

Sainik Schools

- Sainik Schools are residential institutions offering public school education and are affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), New Delhi.
- **Funding:** These schools receive financial support from both **Central and State governments.**
- **Establishment:** Launched in **1961**, Sainik Schools were designed to prepare students academically, physically, and mentally for entry into the **National Defence Academy**.
- **Governance:** They are managed by the **Sainik Schools Society under the Ministry of Defence,** established under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860.

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UP Boosts Football Development

Why in News?

Recently, the **Uttar Pradesh** government announced significant plans to **enhance football** infrastructure and promotion across the state.

Key Points

- UP government to build **18 new football stadiums** across all state commissariats.
- Football grounds to be developed in all **827 blocks of the state** to encourage more tournaments.
- **KD Singh Babu Stadium, Lucknow** was renovated in 19 days to host the **Kolkata Derby**.
  - The **Kolkata Derby** is a football match between **East Bengal and Mohun Bagan,** two of the most popular teams in India. The rivalry between these two clubs is over **100 years old** and is considered one of the biggest local sporting rivalries in the world. The derby is known for its **intense action and passionate fans.**
- UP aligns with **Khelo India initiative**, ensuring government backing for sports development in the state.

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Khelo India Initiative

- Khelo India is a scheme envisioned by the Prime Minister in 2017-18 to give a platform to **grassroots athletes and build sports infrastructure** across India, resulting in turning India into a sporting nation.
- The Khelo India Scheme is the flagship **Central Sector Scheme** of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports.

Operation Bhediya

Why in News?

Recently, the forest department launched **'Operation Bhediya (Wolf)'** after a series of attacks by a pack of wolves in Mehsi tehsil, which resulted in the deaths of six children and a woman, and around 30 injuries over the past 45 days.

Key Points

- **Operation Bhediya**: Aims to capture and neutralize a pack of **wolves** responsible for recent attacks.
- **Technologies and Strategies:**Utilization of **drone** cameras and thermal **drone mapping** to locate and track the wolves.
  - Approval has been obtained for tranquilizing the wolves to safely capture them.
- The **Chief Wildlife Warden** can allow hunting of a **Schedule I wild animal** if it poses a danger to humans by issuing a written order explaining the reasons.
- **Wolf:** It is classified as **"Least Concern"** by the **IUCN**, listed in **Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972,** and included in **Appendix I of CITES.**
- **Schedules in WPA, 1972:**
  - **Schedule I:** Protects endangered species with strict penalties; prohibits hunting except in extreme cases (e.g., Black Buck, **Snow Leopard**).
  - **Schedule II:** High protection and trade prohibition for certain species (e.g., Assamese Macaque, Indian Cobra).
  - **Schedules III & IV:** Protects non-endangered species with lesser penalties for violations (e.g., Chital, **Flamingo**).
  - **Schedule V:** Lists vermin species that can be hunted (e.g., Common Crows, Rats).
  - **Schedule VI:** Regulates cultivation and trade of specified plants, requiring prior permission (e.g., Blue Vanda, Kuth).

Model Solar Village

Why in News?

Every village in Ayodhya with a population of **5,000** will be developed as a **model solar village,** with a goal of installing **50,000 solar homes.**

Key Points:

- The **PM Solar Home scheme** aims to turn **Ayodhya** into a **solar city** by **equipping 50,000 homes with solar panels.**
  - The **Model Solar Village** scheme will select one village of **5,000 residents from a list of 42** to promote widespread installation of solar panels.
- Each family for **1 kilowatt solar panel** will incur a cost of **Rs.65,000, with Rs.30,000** subsidized by the central government and **Rs.15,000** by the state government.
  - Farmers installing solar pumps will receive extra grants under the **KUSUM scheme.**
- The central government has **allocated Rs.1 crore for each Model Solar Village**, which will be transferred to the gram panchayat to fund its development.

What is PM-KUSUM?

- **About:**
  - The **PM-KUSUM** is a flagship scheme initiated by the Indian government in 2019 with the primary objective of transforming the **agricultural sector** by promoting the adoption of solar energy solutions.
  - It operates on a demand-driven approach. Capacities are allocated based on the demands received from various states and union territories (UTs).

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- Through various components and financial support, **PM-KUSUM** envisions achieving a significant **solar power capacity** addition of **30.8 GW** by March 31, 2026.

- **Objectives of PM-KUSUM:**
  - **Reduce the Farm Sector's Reliance on Diesel:** The scheme aims to reduce the dependence on diesel for irrigation by encouraging the use of **solar-powered pumps** and other renewable energy sources.
    - It also seeks to increase farmers' income by reducing irrigation costs through the use of solar pumps and enabling them to sell surplus solar power to the grid.
  - **Water and Energy Security for Farmers:** By providing access to solar pumps and promoting solar-based community irrigation projects, the scheme aims to enhance water and energy security for farmers.
  - **Curbing Environmental Pollution:** Through the adoption of **clean and renewable solar energy,** the scheme aims to mitigate environmental pollution caused by conventional energy sources.
- **Components:**
  - **Component-A:** Setting up of **10,000 MW** of Decentralized Ground/Stilt Mounted Solar Power Plants on barren/fallow/pasture/ marshy/ cultivable land of farmers.
  - **Component-B:** Installation of **20 Lakh Stand-alone Solar Pumps** in off-grid areas.
  - **Component-C:** Solarisation of 15 Lakh Grid Connected Agriculture Pumps through Individual Pump Solarisation and Feeder Level Solarisation.

Return Of Sacred Piprahwa Relics to India After 127 Years

Why in News?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcomed the return of the sacred **Piprahwa relics** of **Lord Buddha** to India after **127 years**, calling it a **proud and joyous moment** for the nation's **cultural heritage**.

- **Godrej Industries (with government)** played a key role in **acquiring and repatriating the relics,** which were taken abroad during the colonial era, from Sotheby's auction house, ensuring their return to India for display at the National Museum in New Delhi.

About Piprahwa Relics

- **About:** The **Piprahwa relics**, believed to contain **relics of Lord Buddha**, were excavated by **William Claxton Peppé** in **1898** at the **Piprahwa Stupa in Uttar Pradesh**, believed to be **ancient Kapilavastu**, the **birthplace of Lord Buddha**.
  - They include **bone fragments** of the Buddha, **soapstone caskets, crystal caskets, gemstones,** gold ornaments, and other ritual offerings.
  - An **inscription in Brahmi script** on one casket links the relics directly to Lord Buddha, stating they were deposited by **the Sakya clan.**
- **Legal Protection of the Relics:**
  - India **classifies the relics as 'AA' antiquities (**highest level of legal protection).
  - Indian law **prohibits their sale or export**, making any **attempt to auction** or remove them illegal.
  - While most relics were **handed over to the Indian Museum, Kolkata, in 1899**, descendants of **British excavator William Claxton Peppé** retained some relics like Piprahwa relics.

Note: The **relics of the Buddha** were enshrined in **9 stupas** built at various locations after his death, including:

- **Rajagriha**, **Vaishali**, **Vethadipa**, and **Pava** in **Bihar**
- **Kapilavastu**, **Allakappa**, and **Ramagrama** in **Nepal**
- **Kushinagar** and **Pippalvina** in **Uttar Pradesh**.

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UP's New Chief Secretary: Shashi Prakash Goyal

Why in News?

Senior **IAS officer Shashi Prakash Goyal** has been appointed as the **new Chief Secretary** of **Uttar Pradesh**, following the completion of the tenure of the current Chief Secretary, **Manoj Kumar Singh**.

- Goyal will serve until his retirement in **January 2027**.

Key Facts About Chief Secretary

- **Office:** The office of the **Chief Secretary** in India originated during British rule in **1799** under **Lord Wellesley** and has since become integral to the state's administration.
  - The **Chief Secretary** serves as the highest-ranking civil servant in a state, overseeing the **state Secretariat** and coordinating **government functions**.
- **Appointment and Status:** The Chief Secretary is appointed by the **Chief Minister** (in the name of the Governor of the state) from senior **IAS officers** based on factors like seniority, merit, and trust.
  - The office was standardized in **1973** to equate it with the position of **Secretary to the Government of India**.
- **Powers and Functions:**
  - **Advisor to Chief Minister:** Acts as the **principal advisor** on matters of **state administration** and provides guidance on **policy issues**.
  - **Secretary to the Cabinet:** Prepares the **Cabinet meeting agenda**, records proceedings, and oversees **decision implementation**.
  - **Head of Civil Service:** Oversees **appointments, transfers, and promotions** within the state civil service and maintains the **morale** of civil servants.
  - **Chief Coordinator:** Ensures **inter-departmental coordination**, presides over **coordination committees**, and resolves **disputes** between departments.
  - **Head of Certain Departments:** Directly manages key departments such as **General Administration, Personnel, and Planning**.
  - **Crisis Administrator:** Leads **relief operations** during crises like **floods**, **droughts**, and **communal disturbances**, representing the state government during emergencies.

Note:

- **Prof. Ajit Kumar Chaturvedi Appointment as BHU Vice Chancellor: Professor Ajit Kumar Chaturvedi** has been appointed as the **Vice Chancellor** of **Banaras Hindu University (BHU)** for a three-year term, as announced by the **President of India**.
  - Prof. **Ajit Kumar Chaturvedi**, a **1989-batch IIT Kanpur graduate**, has an extensive academic career, having previously served as the **Director of IIT Roorkee** (2017-2022).
  - He also held leadership roles at **IIT Kanpur**, including as **Head of Electrical Engineering**, **Dean of R&D**, and **Deputy Director**.

India's First Private AI-Augmented Chandigarh University Campus in Unnao

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh has taken a pioneering step in higher education by inaugurating **India's first private AI-augmented multidisciplinary Chandigarh University campus** in **Unnao**, under the leadership of Chief Minister **Yogi Adityanath**.

- The university aims to blend modern education with **cutting-edge technology** and India's **cultural heritage**, marking a significant milestone in Uttar Pradesh's educational and technological landscape.

Key Points

- **AI-Driven Multidisciplinary Education:** The newly inaugurated university will leverage **artificial intelligence** to enhance **teaching methodologies**, focusing on **research, innovation**, and **holistic growth**.

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- This aligns with the National Education Policy's emphasis on multidisciplinary education.

- **Aligning with National Missions:** CM Yogi highlighted the university's alignment with national initiatives like Startup India, aiming to strengthen Uttar Pradesh's global presence by fostering **entrepreneurship** and **industry collaboration**.
  - CM Yogi stated that universities should act as **platforms for career guidance**, **industry-oriented skill development**, and **opportunity gateways** for students.

Education Reforms and Infrastructure in UP

- **UP has facilitated the establishment of 23 new private universities** and also hosts the country's first Ayush University **(Mahayogi Guru Gorakhnath AYUSH University in Gorakhpur)** and is building a **sports university (Major Dhyanchand State Sports University).**
  - Under the new reform, the **state now allows private universities on 50 acres of land in rural areas and 20 acres in urban areas.**
  - Universities across the state are increasingly committed to improving their NAAC assessments and NIRF rankings. As a result, **six state universities have earned A++ grades, two have received A+ grades,** and notable progress has been made in national rankings.

Innovation Potential in UP

- **Uttar Pradesh** has emerged as the **third-largest startup hub in India**, with over 7,200 active startups generating more than 1 lakh jobs. The **state is also home to 8 unicorns**.
- An **ambitious AI City project is initiated in Lucknow**, with the goal of creating over **50,000 jobs** through the participation of **more than 400 companies**.
  - IBM will lead the establishment of the AI Center.

Lucknow As India's First AI City

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh is set to become a leader in artificial intelligence (AI) with a **Rs 10,732 crore investment** aimed at transforming **Lucknow** into **India's first AI City**.

- The initiative, launched under the IndiaAI Mission approved in March 2024, aims to build a robust **AI ecosystem in the state.**

Key Points

- **Massive Investment in AI Infrastructure:** The **Rs 10,732 crore investment** will fund **10,000 Graphics Processing Units (GPUs)**, **multi-modal language models**, and the establishment of an **AI innovation center** in Lucknow.
  - This investment is **67% higher** than any other technology infrastructure in the country.
- **AI Pragya Training Initiative:** As part of the AI Pragya initiative, over **10 lakh people**, including **youth, teachers, gram pradhans**, **government employees**, and **farmers**, will receive training in **AI**, machine learning, data analytics, and cybersecurity.
  - The training is being supported by global tech giants like **Microsoft**, **Intel**, **Google**, and **Guvi**.
- **AI Traffic Management System:** Lucknow will also see the implementation of a **high-tech AI-based traffic management system**, similar to the one being developed in **Varanasi**.
- **AI in Agriculture and Revenue Management:** The UP Agris Project will connect **10 lakh farmers** to AI-powered technologies such as **smart irrigation**, **drone mapping**, **pest detection**, and **digital market access**.
  - The revenue department is also using **satellite imaging** and **AI algorithms** for **land consolidation** and **record management**, ensuring **transparency** and reducing disputes.
- **AI in Security and Healthcare:** AI-powered systems such as **CCTV surveillance**, **facial recognition**,

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number plate tracking, and **SOS alert systems** have been integrated across **17 municipal corporations** and **Gautam Buddh Nagar**.

- Additionally, **AI** is being used to monitor **illegal mining** and **mineral resource protection**. In the **healthcare sector**, the country's first **AI-based breast cancer screening center** has been set up in **Fatehpur**.

Medha Roopam: Gautam Buddh Nagar's First Woman DM

Why in News?

Medha Roopam, a 2014-batch IAS officer, has been appointed as Gautam Buddh Nagar's **first woman District Magistrate (DM).**

- She takes over from **Manish Kumar Verma**, who has been transferred to **Prayagraj**.

Key Points

- **Academic Background:** Roopam secured **All India Rank 10 in the 2014** UPSC Civil Services Examination, and she is **also a national-level rifle shooter** who has won **three gold medals** at the Kerala State Shooting Championship.
- **Family Background:** Roopam's father, **Gyanesh Kumar**, is a retired **Kerala-cadre IAS officer** and the current **Chief Election Commissioner** of India.

71st National Film Awards

Why in News?

The **71st National Film Awards** were officially announced, honoring cinematic excellence from across India **for the year 2023.**

Key Points

- The 2023 edition of the awards covered **31 feature films**, **24 non-feature films**, **27 books on cinema**, and **16 film critics** as part of the expanded scope under the **National Film Awards regulations**.
- **Shah Rukh Khan** won **his first National Award** in a career spanning over 30 years.

National Film Awards

- **Organizer:** The **Ministry of Information and Broadcasting** organizes the National Film Awards on behalf of the Government of India.
- **Award Categories:** The annual awards are conferred under the following sections: **Feature Film, Non-Feature Film, Best Writing on Cinema** and **Dadasaheb Phalke Award.**

Top National Winners

Category	Winner(s)
Best Feature Film	*12th Fail*
Best Direction	*Sudipto Sen – The Kerala Story*
Best Actor	*Shah Rukh Khan* (*Jawan*), *Vikrant Massey* (*12th Fail*)
Best Actress	*Rani Mukerji – Mrs. Chatterjee vs Norway*
Best Popular Film Providing Wholesome Entertainment	*Rocky Aur Rani Kii Prem Kahaani*
Best Debut Film of a Director	*Aatmapamphlet*
Best Film Promoting National, Social, and Environmental Values	*Sam Bahadur*

Feature Film Awards

Award Category	Film / Artist
Best Hindi Film	*Kathal*
Best Bengali Film	*Deep Fridge*
Best Marathi Film	*Shyamchi Aai*
Best Background Score	*Animal* (Harshavardhan Rameshwar)
Best Female Playback Singer	*Shilpa Rao – Chaliya (Jawan)*
Best Male Playback Singer	*PVN S Rohit – Baby (Telugu)*
Best Editing	*Pookkaalam* – Midhun Murali
Best Cinematography	*The Kerala Story* – Prasanthanu Mohapatra

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Best Costume Design	*Sam Bahadur* – Sachin, Divya, Nidhhi
Best Makeup	*Sam Bahadur* – Shrikanth Desai
Best Choreography	*Dhindhora Baje Re – Rocky Aur Rani* (Vaibhavi Merchant)
Best Sound Design	*Animal* – Sachin Sudhakaran & Hariharan

Acting Awards	
Category	**Winner(s)**
Best Actor	*Shah Rukh Khan* (*Jawan*), *Vikrant Massey* (*12th Fail*)
Best Actress	*Rani Mukerji* (*Mrs Chatterjee vs Norway*)
Best Supporting Actor	*Vijayaraghavan* (*Pookkaalam*), *Muthupettai Bhaskar* (*Parking*)
Best Supporting Actress	*Urvashi* (*Ullozhukku*), *Janki Bodiwala* (*Vash*)
Best Child Artist	Sukriti Bandireddi (*Gandhi Thatha Chettu*), Kabir Khandare (*Gypsy*), Treesha Toshar, Shrinivas Pokale, Bhargav (*Naal 2*)

Non-Feature Film Awards	
Award	**Recipient**
Best Documentary	*God, Vulture and Human*
Best Non-Fiction Film	*Flowering Man*
Best Short Film	*Giddh – The Scavenger*
Best Children's Film	*Naal 2*
Best Film in AVGC	*HanuMan*
Best Voiceover	*The Sacred Jack* – Hari Krishnan S
Best Debut (Non-feature)	*The Spirit Dreams of Cheraw*
Best Social & Environmental Values	*The Silent Epidemic*

Sonali Mishra: First Woman DG Of RPF

Why in News?

In a historic moment for **Indian Railways**, **Sonali Mishra**, a 1983 batch **IPS officer** from **Madhya Pradesh**, has assumed the position of **Director General (DG)** of the **Railway Protection Force (RPF)**, becoming the first woman to lead the force in its 143-year history.

Key Points

- **Appointment: Sonali Mishra's appointment** was approved by the **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet**, and her tenure as DG will extend until her superannuation on **31st October 2026**.
  - She succeeds **Manoj Yadava**, who retired on **31st July 2025**.
- **Before her appointment as DG of RPF**
  - Served as **Additional Director General of Police (Selection/Recruitment)** in Madhya Pradesh.
  - Held additional responsibilities at the **Police Training & Research Institute, Bhopal**.
  - Served as the **Director of the Madhya Pradesh Police Academy**.
- **Career**
  - She worked with the **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)** and **Border Security Force (BSF)**.
  - Gained international experience with the **United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in Kosovo**.
- **Recognitions and Awards**
  - Awarded the **President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service**.
  - Honored with the **Police Medal for Meritorious Service**.

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RPF

- The **RPF is an armed force** under the control of the Union **Ministry of Railways,** tasked with **protecting railway property, passenger areas, and passengers**.
  - Originally **part of the Watch and Ward set-up of** Private Railway Companies in 1881, it was **reorganised into a statutory body** under the **RPF Act, 1957.**
  - The post-independence era brought significant changes; the **Railway Property (Unlawful Possession) Act** was passed in 1966 to improve security, and in 1985, the RPF Act was amended, making RPF an Armed Force and **emerged as a Central Police Organization.**
  - **Motto: Yasho Labhasva (Attaining honour).**

FDI in UP Shows Significant Growth

Why in News?

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in Uttar Pradesh (UP) has surged significantly in recent years, with the state government reporting significant growth between 2019 and 2023.

Key Points

- **Historical Challenges:** Historically, UP struggled with a poor industrial ecosystem that discouraged foreign investors. A combination of factors contributed to this unfavorable environment, including:
  - Low rankings in ease of doing business
  - Absence of a streamlined **single-window clearance system**
  - Insufficient basic infrastructure
  - Unclear **industrial policies**
  - Unstable law and order conditions
- **Shift in FDI Trends:** From 2000 to 2017, Uttar Pradesh's FDI was limited to only Rs 3,000 crore, but it has surged in recent years.
  - Uttar Pradesh is now the 11th most attractive state for FDI, with a total inflow of $1.7 billion from October 2019 to September 2024.
  - The **state ranks first in India for the export of consumer electronics,** hosting 196 Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM) companies currently operating within its borders.
- **Key Policy Reforms**:
  - The UP Investors Summit 2018 set the stage for the state's investment-friendly initiatives.
    - The summit attracted investment proposals worth Rs 4.28 lakh crore.
    - Building on this success, the Global Investors Summit (GIS) in 2023 drew Rs 33.50 lakh crore in investment proposals.
  - Uttar Pradesh Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Fortune Global 500 & Fortune India 500 Companies' Investment Promotion Policy-2023
  - Uttar Pradesh Industrial Investment and Employment Promotion Policy 2022
  - Uttar Pradesh Green Hydrogen Policy 2024
  - Uttar Pradesh Global Capability Centres Policy 2024
- **Project Implementation:** The UP government introduced the concept of Groundbreaking Ceremonies (GBCs).
  - These events serve as a platform for launching large-scale investment projects statewide, with over 16,000 projects initiated across the first four GBCs, more than 8,000 of which are already operational.
    - For the upcoming **GBC-5**, the state government is targeting the grounding of projects worth Rs 5 lakh crore, with the potential to scale up to Rs 10 lakh crore by the event's date.
    - The bulk of the investment has flowed into the manufacturing, services, and infrastructure sectors, with the **manufacturing sector receiving the largest share at 62.25% of the total investment.**

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FDI and FPI

Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

- ***About:***
  - Investment made by foreign entities/individuals in businesses and assets located in a different country
- ***FDI Routes:***
  - Automatic Route:
    - No prior government approval required
    - Up to 100% allowed in non-critical sectors
  - Government Approval:
    - Necessary in certain sectors or for investments above specific thresholds
    - Administered by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) and RBI
- ***Examples of Approval via Auto and Govt Route:***
  - Banking (Private sector): up to 49% (auto) + above 49% and up to 74% (Govt)
  - Defence: up to 74% (auto) + above 74% (Govt)
  - Healthcare (Brownfield): up to 74% (auto) + above 74% (Govt)
  - Telecom Services: up to 49% (auto) + above 49% (Govt)
- ***Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB):***
  - Comes under Ministry of Finance
  - Responsible for processing FDI proposals - facilitated by Foreign Investment Facilitation Portal (FIFP)
  - Making recommendations for Government approval

Govt's prior approval is mandatory for FDIs from countries sharing land border with India (China, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bhutan, Nepal, Myanmar and Afghanistan)

- ***India's Top 5 FDI Sources (FY 2022-23):***
  - Mauritius
  - Singapore
  - USA
  - Netherland
  - Japan
- ***India's Top Sectors Attracting FDI (FY 2022-23):***
  - Services Sector
  - Computer Software & Hardware
  - Trading
  - Telecommunications
  - Automobile Industry

Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI)

- ***About:***
  - Investments made by foreign individuals, institutions, or funds in financial assets
  - Known as Fly by Night or Hot Money
- ***Imp Features:***
  - Purchase of financial assets occur without gaining ownership
  - Passive investment approach
  - Investors earn returns through dividends, interest, and capital appreciation
- ***Example:***
  - Stocks, Bonds etc.
- ***Regulatory Body:***
  - Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)

Difference between FDI and FPI

Features	*FDI*	*FPI*
Nature of Investment	Long-term	Short-term
Objective	Long-term presence in a foreign country	Earning quick returns on investments
Control	Significant (over the invested entity)	No or limited control
Investments in	Tangible assets (e.g., factories, buildings)	Financial assets (e.g., stocks, bonds)
Returns	Profits, Dividends, and Capital appreciation	Dividends, Interest, and Capital appreciation
Policy Regulations	Govt policies and sector -specific regulations	Flexible regulations and easier entry/exit
Impact on Economy	Job creation, technology transfer, and economic growth	Short-term liquidity and impact on stock market performance

Drishti IAS

UP Economic Offences Wing Revamped

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh Economic Offences Wing (EOW)** has undergone significant restructuring to enhance its capabilities, taking inspiration from the **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).**

- The new measures focus on adopting advanced technological tools, accelerating investigations, and **improving public accessibility** to report financial crimes.

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Key Reforms and Measures

- **Enhanced Public Access:** A major reform allows citizens easy access to report financial crimes.
  - The state's emergency helpline, **112**, has been integrated with EOW to enable the public to report cases such as **Ponzi scheme fraud**, **Stamp fraud, Multi-marketing fraud**, etc.
- **Professional Expertise and Training:** The EOW aims to become a robust and trusted institution for both enforcement and public outreach.
  - To enhance the professionalism of its officers, a **day-long workshop** was organized with experts from agencies like the **CBI, Enforcement Directorate**, and other central agencies.
  - The focus of the **workshop was to educate** on various forms of financial crimes, address investigation nuances, and tackle emerging challenges in financial crime enforcement.
- **Public Awareness and Education:** A core part of EOW's strategy is public awareness.
  - The agency has created **eight animated booklets in both digital and print** formats to **educate citizens** about various financial crimes they may encounter and how to stay vigilant and protected.
  - A **short film** on financial crime prevention was also launched to engage the public, along with a **new EOW logo**.
- **Technological Upgrades:** The EOW is now equipped with cutting-edge tools to streamline operations, including **24×7 Case Management Software (CMS)** for real-time case monitoring and faster resolution.

Economic Offences Wing (EOW)

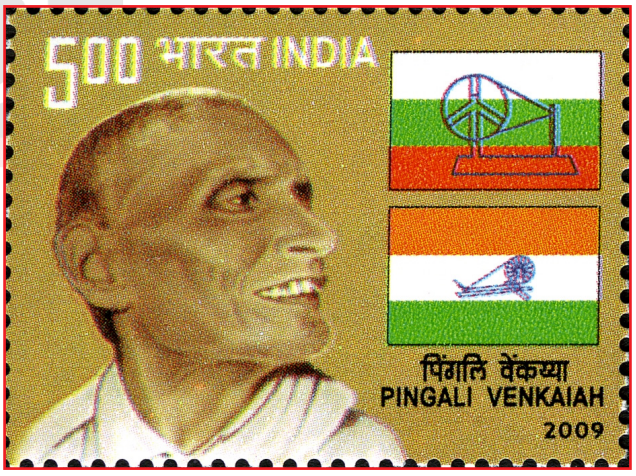
- The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) was **created in 1970 within the CID** to address economic crimes, with an expanded focus in **1972** to include offenses related to 10 government departments.
  - In 1977, EOW was restructured as a separate, specialized investigation branch of the Uttar Pradesh Police.
- In 2006, the **EOW's jurisdiction was further broadened** to include the investigation and inquiry of economic offenses across all government departments.
- In 2018, the government established four police stations within EOW sectors in Lucknow, Varanasi, Meerut, and Kanpur.
- The **EOW is led by the D.G. EOW, with its headquarters in Lucknow**, is divided into five sectors, each managed by an **officer of SP rank.**

Birth Anniversary Of Pingali Venkayya

Why in News?

On **2nd August,** PM Modi paid **tributes to** Pingali Venkayya on his 149th birth anniversary, highlighting his immense **contribution in designing India's national flag**, a symbol of the nation's unity, diversity, and independence.

- He also **urged citizens to support the** Har Ghar Tiranga movement by unfurling the **Tricolour at their homes.**



Pingali Venkayya

- **He was born on 2nd August 1876** in Bhatlapenumarru village, near Machilipatnam, **Andhra Pradesh**, and **passed away on 4th July 1963** at the age of 86.
- He fought the **Second Boer War (1899-1902).**
- In **1913,** he delivered a lecture in Japanese in Bapatla, Andhra Pradesh, called **'Japan Venkayya'.**
- He was also **known as Patti Venkayya for his research into the Cambodia Cotton.**

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- In 2009, **a postage stamp was released for his contribution.**

Evolution of Flag

- In **1916, Pingali Venkayya** published a booklet titled **A National Flag for India**, featuring nearly **30 designs** for a **potential Indian flag,** inspired by flags of other nations.
- **Venkayya's design** for the National Flag was **finally approved by Mahatma Gandhi** in a Congress meeting in **Vijayawada** in 1921.
- The initial flag, called the **Swaraj flag,** consisted of two red and green bands (representing the Hindus and the Muslims religious communities). The flag also had a **charkha**, which represented **Swaraj.**
  - Mahatma Gandhi advised Venkayya to add **a white band to represent peace.**
- The **Flag Committee (1931)** replaced the **red with saffron** and placed saffron on top followed by white and then green. The **charkha was placed on the white band** in the middle.
  - The **colors stood for qualities and not communities** i.e., the **saffron for courage and sacrifice**, **white for truth and peace**, and **green for faith and strength**. The charkha stood for the welfare of the masses.
- Post-Independence, a national flag committee under **President Rajendra Prasad** replaced the **charkha with the Ashok Chakra.**

'Operation Mahakal' to Tackle Land Mafia and Extortionists

Why in News?

Kanpur's police have initiated a bold crackdown on land mafia and extortion gangs with the launch of **'Operation Mahakal.'**

- This operation, **launched on 5th August 2025,** aims **to identify, prosecute**, and dismantle illegal land-grabbing activities, involving **not only criminals but also influential individuals aiding them.**

Key Points

- **Phases of Operation:** The operation is structured in two phases:
  - **Phase 1 (until 5th September 2025):** Focuses on **compiling a list of suspects involved in land-grabbing** and extortion.
  - **Phase 2:** From 15th September 2025, action will be taken, including asset confiscation and filing of charges.
- **Action against Collaborators:** Investigations have uncovered connections between the **land mafia and several white-collar professionals,** including government employees, representatives, and journalists.
  - The collaboration between these groups will be probed further.

Former Governor Satyapal Malik Passes Away

Why in News?

Former Governor Satyapal Malik passed away at the age of 79 **on 5th August 2025**, after battling a prolonged illness.

- He **served as the Governor of five states**, including Jammu and Kashmir, and played a pivotal role during the historic abrogation of Article 370 in 2019.

Key points

- **Early Life:** Malik was born on 24th July 1946, in Hisawada village**, Uttar Pradesh**.

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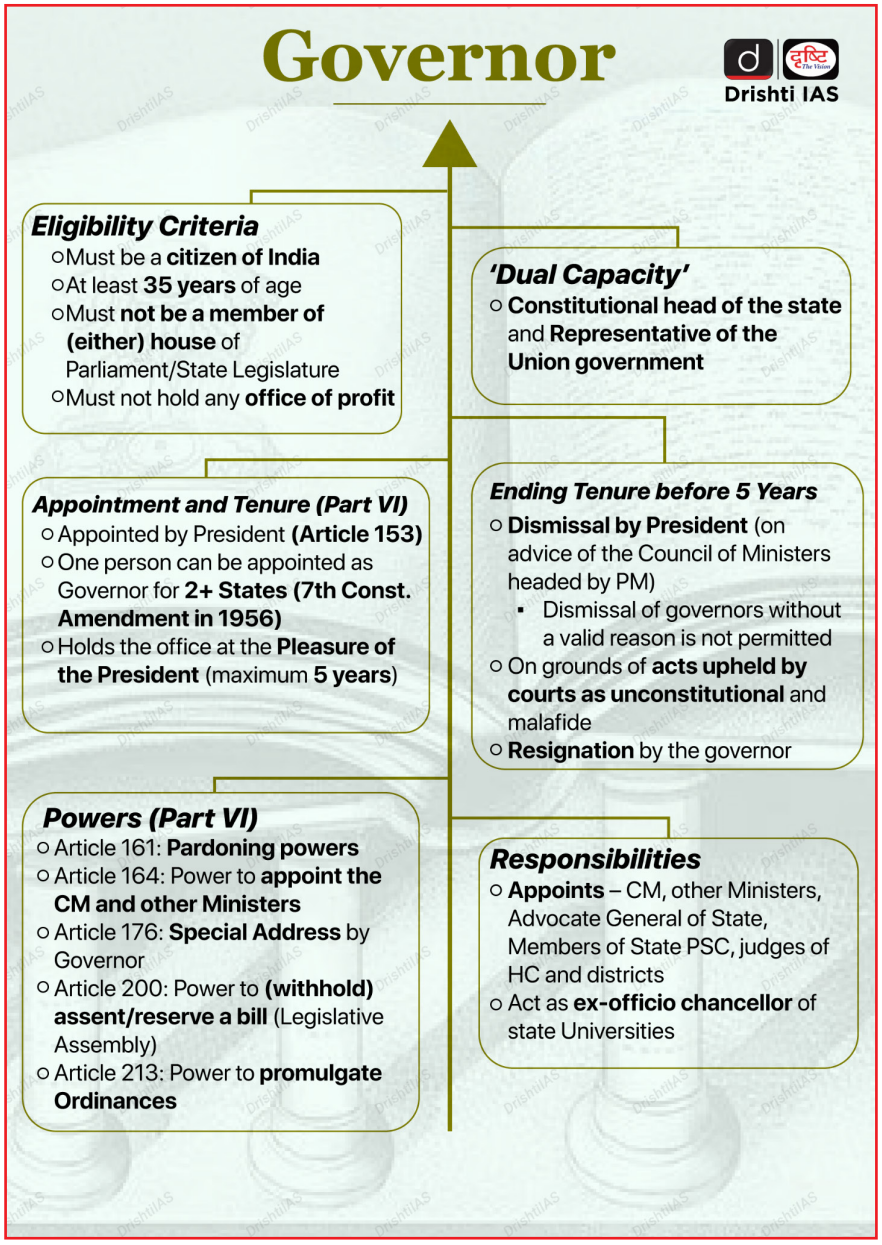
- **Political Journey of Satyapal Malik:**
  - **Student Politics**: Began his political career in 1965 at Meerut College.
  - **Member of Legislative Assembly**: Elected as MLA for Baghpat in 1974.
  - **Rajya Sabha**: Entered the Rajya Sabha in 1980.
    - Rejoined the Rajya Sabha in 1984 after a brief period of change.
  - **Lok Sabha**: Elected to the Lok Sabha from Aligarh in 1989.
  - **Governor Positions**:
    - **Bihar** (2017–2018)
    - **Odisha** (Additional charge in 2018)
    - **Jammu and Kashmir** (2018–2019)
    - **Goa** (2019–2020)
    - **Meghalaya** (2020–2022)

Governor



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Lucknow's Charbagh Railway Station Completed 100 Years

Why in News?

On 1st August 2025, Charbagh Railway Station in Lucknow marked its centenary (100 years). Its unique architecture and deep-rooted history symbolize the distinct identity of the city.

Key Points

- **History and Architecture:** The construction of **Charbagh Station** is a beautiful blend of Mughal, Rajasthani, and British architecture.
  - The **foundation of Charbagh Station was laid in 1914 by Bishop George Herbert**, and it was completed in 1923.
  - The building is designed as an amalgamation of Indo-British style of **architecture by J.H Horniman.**
  - **On 1st August 1925 C.L Colvin, the agent of East India Railway** laid inside the turret of the same building, a **casket containing a coin of those times and a newspaper of the same day** as a call to remembrance of the successful completion of the foundation of the building.
- **Role in the Independence Movement:** Charbagh Station has witnessed the arrival of prominent leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Maulana Azad during the freedom struggle.
  - It is believed that the **first formal meeting between Gandhi ji and Nehru (26th December 1916)** took place at this station, making it an important historical site.

UP Increases Maintenance Allowance for Students

Why in News?

Under the **Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme**, the Uttar Pradesh (UP) Government has **doubled the maintenance allowance for disabled students**, increasing it from **₹2,000 to ₹4,000 per month.**

- An increase in the maintenance allowance will **benefit 2,650 disabled students enrolled in 28 residential schools** across the state.
- According to the data of the UP government, over **50 lakh students benefit from the state's scholarship and fee reimbursement programs every year**, including around 14-15 lakh from the Scheduled Castes.

Key Points

- **Excluding Criteria:** The government has made **students above 40 years of age ineligible for scholarships,** whereas previously, there was no maximum age limit for applicants.
  - **Students passing their high school exams from state boards outside UP** will **no longer be eligible for scholarships,** but those from central boards like CBSE and ICSE will still receive them.
  - The amended scheme will also **exclude students of UP campuses run by universities domiciled outside the state** from receiving scholarships.
- **Mandatory: DigiLocker registration** will now be **mandatory for scholarship applicants**, enabling automatic **Aadhaar-based data verification** and helping prevent fraud.
- **Increased Amount for SC Students:** For **Scheduled Caste (SC)** students, the yearly scholarship amount will be increased **by Rs 500, taking the total to Rs 3,500 per annum.**
  - Under the **Pre-Matric Scholarship Scheme,** the **income limit restriction has been removed for children of families engaged in unhygienic professions** such as manual scavenging and working with raw leather, allowing them to avail the benefits of the scholarship scheme.

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Note: As per the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPwD) Act, 2016, there are **21 recognized types of disabilities:** Blindness, Low-vision, Leprosy Cured Persons, Hearing Impairment (deaf and hard of hearing), Locomotor Disability, Dwarfism, Intellectual Disability, Mental Illness, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Cerebral Palsy, Muscular Dystrophy, Chronic Neurological Conditions, Specific Learning Disabilities (Dyslexia), Multiple Sclerosis, Speech and Language Disability, Thalassemia, Hemophilia, Sickle Cell Disease, Multiple Disabilities including deaf-blindness, Acid Attack victim, and Parkinson's disease.

Nivesh Mitra Portal 3.0

Why in News?

The third-generation version of **Uttar Pradesh's Nivesh Mitra portal** is designed to enhance the ease of doing business by reducing procedural delays and bureaucratic red tape.

Key Points

- **About:** Nivesh Mitra 3.0 is an **advanced, digital single-window platform** launched by the UP Government to **streamline investment processes,** expedite approvals, and enhance the ease of doing business through integration, automation, and AI-powered tools.
- **Features:**
  - **Integrated Digital Ecosystem:** It offers **enhanced interoperability** with both **central and state government portals,** providing a synchronized and unified interface for investor services across departments.
  - **Revamped Common Application Form (CAF):** The dynamic application form is now available in **multiple languages** and adapts to user profiles, making it easier for investors to identify and apply for necessary approvals efficiently.
  - **GIS-enabled Land Bank:** Investors can access centralized, real-time land data using Geographic Information System (GIS) technology, enabling efficient land selection and collaboration with nodal agencies.
  - **Smart Dashboards & Real-Time Analytics:** The portal provides district-wise KPI rankings, **industrial park ratings,** and actionable insights to assist both investors and the administration in monitoring progress and decision-making.
  - **AI-powered Multilingual Chatbots:** Artificial intelligence-based chatbots offer instant, multilingual support and grievance redressal, drastically improving response time and user experience.
  - **Enhanced Grievance Redressal:** The entire complaint and feedback process is automated and routed through digital channels for transparency and faster resolution.
  - **Reduced Service Delivery Timelines:** The platform aims to cut timelines for service delivery by up to 30-50%, minimize procedural delays, and significantly **reduce the need for physical documentation** and visits to government offices.
  - **Compliance Reduction & Deregulation:** By **integrating over 4,600 reforms** across 45 departments, including simplification of forms and deregulation of legal requirements, Nivesh Mitra 3.0 aims to create a more business-friendly environment.
  - **Extensive Departmental Coverage:** The system **covers over 525 services** from more than 44 departments, including labor, fire, housing, urban planning, and environmental clearances.

National Fish Farmers Day 2025

Why in News?

National Fish Farmers Day 2025 was celebrated is set to be celebrated **on 10th July at the ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA)** to honor the tireless dedication of fish farmers in strengthening India's food security, meeting the demand for fish-based protein, and driving rural employment.

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Key Points

- **Honoring the Legacy:** National Fish Farmers Day commemorates the pioneering work of Professor **Dr. Hiralal Chaudhury and Dr. K.H. Alikunhi in 1957**, who revolutionized Indian fisheries with the **Hypophysation technique**, enabling induced breeding and reproduction in Indian Major Carps.
  - This scientific breakthrough led to the growth of Inland Aquaculture in India.
- **Key Initiatives and Investments:** The Government of India has **invested ₹38,572 crore in the fisheries sector since 2015**.
  - **Fish production** has grown from **95.79 lakh tonnes in FY 2013-14 to 195 lakh tonnes in FY 2024-25**.
  - **India** has become a **global leader in shrimp exports**, crossing ₹60,500 crore, with shrimp production increasing by 270% over the past decade.

State of India's Fisheries Sector

- **India is the 2nd largest fish producer** and 2nd largest aquaculture nation in the world after China.
- **India has ascended to become the 4th-largest exporter of marine products**, marking a significant rise from **eighth position in 2014-15**.
  - Inland fisheries account for over 75% of total output.
- **Top fish-producing states:** Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Karnataka.

ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA)

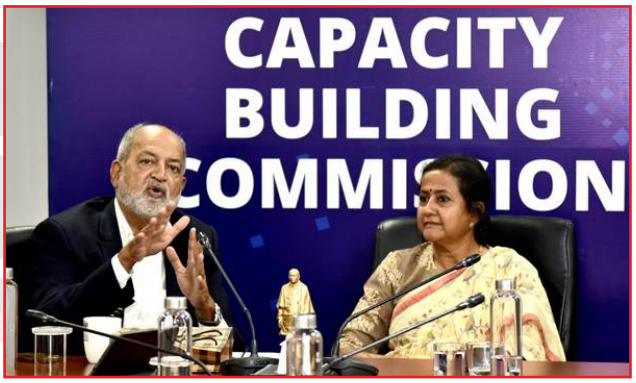
- **Established**:
  - Originated from the **Pond Culture Division of CIFRI in 1949, Cuttack**, Odisha.
  - Operates under the **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).**
- **Mission**:
  - Focuses on sustainable and diversified freshwater aquaculture practices.
  - Aims to enhance productivity, quality, water use efficiency, and farm income.

S. Radha Chauhan: New Chairperson Of Capacity Building Commission

Why in News?

Mrs. S. Radha Chauhan took over as the Chairperson of the **Capacity Building Commission** in New Delhi, succeeding **Shri Adil Zainulbhai**, who had held the position since April 2021.

- Mrs. Chauhan, a retired IAS officer from the UP Cadre (1988 batch), also served as the Secretary of the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT).



Capacity Building Commission

- The Capacity Building Commission (CBC) is an **independent body** with full executive authority, operational since April 2021.
- It is a **three-member Commission,** supported by an internal Secretariat headed by a Secretary.
- Members are appointed from diverse backgrounds such as the private sector, academia, the public sector, and civil society.
- The Commission is tasked with driving the **standardisation** and **harmonisation** across India's civil services landscape.
- As the custodian of civil services capacity-building reforms, the Commission plays a **central role** in the institutional framework of **Mission Karmayogi.**

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Mission Karmayogi

- Mission Karmayogi was launched by the Government of India in September 2020 as a **National Program for Civil Services Capacity Building (NPCSCB).**
- It aims to prepare Indian civil servants for the future by making them more **creative, proactive, professional,** energetic, transparent and technology enabled.

11th National Handloom Day

Why in News?

On 7th August 2025, the Ministry of Textiles celebrated **India's handloom sector** during the **11th National Handloom Day (NHD)**, focusing on the **theme 'Weaving Innovation into Tradition.'**

- **On 11th NHD**, at Bharat Mandapam, the President of India presented the prestigious **5 Sant Kabir Handloom Awards and 19 National Handloom Awards for 2024.**

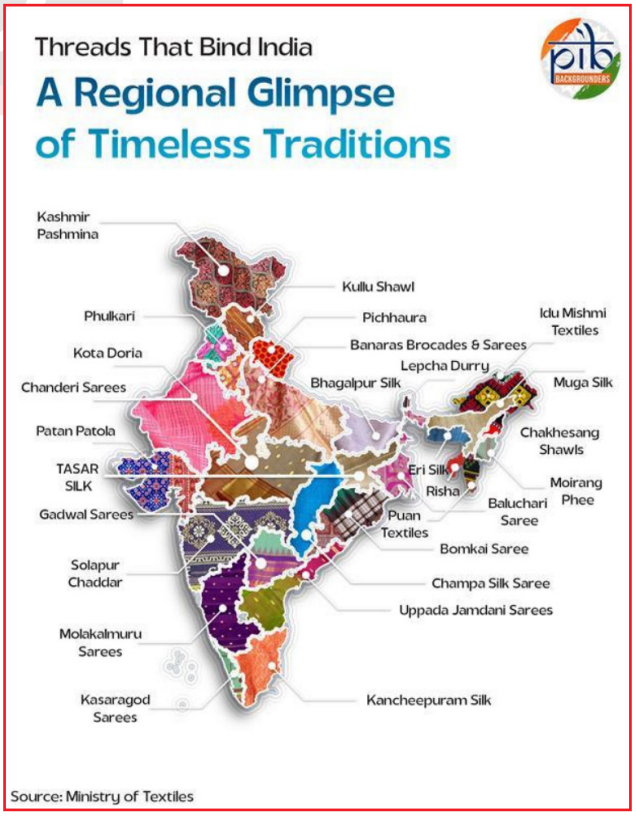
National Handloom Day

- **Established on 7th August 2015**, **NHD** marks the momentous occasion of the **Swadeshi Movement,** which began on **7th August 1905, encouraging indigenous** handloom weaving **industries**.
  - NHD celebrates the **skilled craftsmanship** and creativity behind Indian handlooms, recognizing their significance as a cherished cultural legacy.
- In partnership with the **National Handloom Development Corporation (NHDC),** the Ministry also introduced the Exclusive Handloom Expo and the **"Haat on Wheels"** mobile retail initiative.
- The **"Know Your Weaves Campaign 2025"** was also launched by the Ministry of Textiles as a week-long event from 1st -7st August 2025 in celebration of National Handloom Day.

Handloom Awards

- **About:** The awards aim to honour excellence in the handloom industry, celebrating individuals and organizations that **set benchmarks in craftsmanship,** innovation, and contribution to the sector's development.

Categories of awards:		
Aspect	**Sant Kabir Handloom Award**	**National Handloom Award**
Purpose	Recognizes outstanding handloom weavers for significant contributions to sector growth and tradition.	Celebrates weavers for exceptional craftsmanship, dedication, and innovation.
Eligibility	Outstanding handloom weavers; may include national/state awardees, merit certificate holders, or extraordinary contributors.	Weavers with exemplary craftsmanship, innovation, and dedication.
Cash	Rs. 3.5 lakh	Rs. 2 lakh



Source: Ministry of Textiles

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Handloom Sector

- **About:** The Handloom sector remains a cornerstone of **India's rural economy** and cultural heritage, providing employment to **over 35 lakh people,** with 70% being women.
- **Global Presence:** India is the **world's sole major producer of handloom fabrics** at a commercial scale, accounting for nearly **95% of global handwoven fabric production.**
  - India's handloom exports continue to find strong demand across global markets, reaching over 20 countries.
  - In the financial year 2024-25, the United States remained the largest destination, accounting for **₹331.56 crore worth of exports.**
- **Major Schemes:**
  - **National Handloom Development Programme (NHDP):** It aims to promote the **sustainable growth of handloom weavers** in and outside recognised clusters by forming self-reliant and competitive units.
  - **Raw Material Supply Scheme (RMSS):** It aims to support handloom weavers by ensuring the availability of quality yarn at affordable prices through the following key objectives and components.
  - **MUDRA Loan:** This scheme offers subsidised loans to weavers through banks at a low interest rate of 6 per cent.

WHO–IRCH International Workshop

Why in News?

The **Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine and Homoeopathy** (PCIM&H), **Ministry of Ayush,** hosted the **inaugural session of the WHO–International Regulatory Cooperation for Herbal Medicines (IRCH) Workshops** on "Safety and Regulation of Herbal Medicines" (Working Group-1) and "Efficacy and Intended Use of Herbal Medicines" (Working Group-3) at its headquarters in **Ghaziabad.**

- **India, as the lead country** for Working Groups 1 and 3, is committed to strengthening international regulatory cooperation through the WHO–IRCH platform.

Key Points

- **About:** The global technical workshop, organized jointly by the **Ministry of Ayush and WHO,** is being held from 6th to 8th August 2025, with senior representatives from WHO Member States, **regulatory authorities, academia, research bodies,** and the herbal medicine industry in attendance.
  - Bringing together experts from across WHO Member States and Observer States, the workshops aim to deliberate on key aspects such as regulatory convergence, quality assurance, and the **clinical relevance of herbal medicines** in traditional systems of **healthcare.**
  - The agenda includes hands-on training sessions in **herbal drug standardisation techniques** such as pharmacognostic, chemical, and elemental analysis.
  - Site visits to **prominent Ayush institutions** are also planned to provide international participants with first-hand exposure to clinical, academic, and manufacturing practices.
  - The workshops have **attracted participants from several countries** under the WHO-IRCH umbrella, including Poland, Nepal, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Japan, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, Paraguay, etc.

Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H)

- Pharmacopoeia Commission for Indian Medicine & Homoeopathy (PCIM&H), is a **subordinate office** under the Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India.
- Development of Pharmacopoeias and Formularies as well as acting as **Central Drug Testing cum Appellate Laboratory** for Indian systems of Medicine & Homoeopathy are the key fields of activity of PCIM&H.

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International Regulatory Cooperation for Herbal Medicines (IRCH)

- International Regulatory Cooperation for Herbal Medicines (IRCH), established in 2006, is a **global network of regulatory authorities** responsible for regulation of herbal medicines.
- Its mission is to **collaborate and share the best practices** to help WHO in its recommendations to the members on improving the regulation of herbal medicines as well as raise awareness regarding their safe use in health and wellbeing.

World Lion Day 2025

Why in News?

The **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)**, in collaboration with the **Gujarat Forest** and Environment Department, marked **World Lion Day 2025 (10th August)** at the **Barda Wildlife Sanctuary in Dwarka district,** Gujarat.

- The **event celebrated** the conservation achievements under **Project Lion**, aimed at **protecting the Asiatic lion (*Panthera leo persica*).**

Key Points

- The **lion population in Gujarat has risen by 32%** since 2020, increasing from 674 to 891, according to the **May 2025 lion population estimate** (**16th census**).
- **Barda Wildlife Sanctuary**, part of the larger Gir Lion Landscape, is home to **17 Asiatic lions**.

Key Facts About Project Lion

- **Launched**: 2020, to secure the future of Asiatic lions in Gujarat's Gir landscape.
- **Focus Areas**: Habitat improvement, ecosystem health, and human-wildlife conflict mitigation.
- **Technologies Used**:
  - **Radio-collaring & Camera Traps**: For monitoring lion movements.
  - **GPS Tracking**: Ensures efficient surveillance of lions and vehicles.
  - **Automated Sensor Grid**: Includes magnetic, movement, and infrared heat sensors for wildlife tracking.
  - **GIS-based Real-Time Monitoring**: Facilitates timely analysis and conservation management.

Key Facts About Lions

- The lion is divided into **two subspecies:** the **African lion** *(Panthera leo leo)* and the **Asiatic lion** *(Panthera leo persica).*
  - Asiatic lions are slightly smaller than African lions.
- **Characteristics:**
  - Lions are known for their distinctive appearance, including a **tawny coat, a tufted tail, and a prominent mane in males.**
  - They are **social animals and live in groups** called **prides**. A pride typically consists of multiple females, their offspring, and a few adult males.
- **Distribution and Habitat:** Lions are **found in sub-Saharan Africa,** and a small population exists in the **Gir Forest National Park (India)**.
- **Protection Status:**
  - **IUCN Red List:**
    - African Lion: Vulnerable (Globally)
    - Asiatic Lion: Vulnerable.
  - **IUCN Green Status of Species Assessment**:
    - **Lions: Largely Depleted category**
  - **CITES: Appendix I for populations of India, all other populations are included in Appendix II.**
  - **Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972: Schedule I and IV**
- **Conservation Efforts in India:**
  - **Project Lion**
  - **Asiatic Lion Conservation Project**

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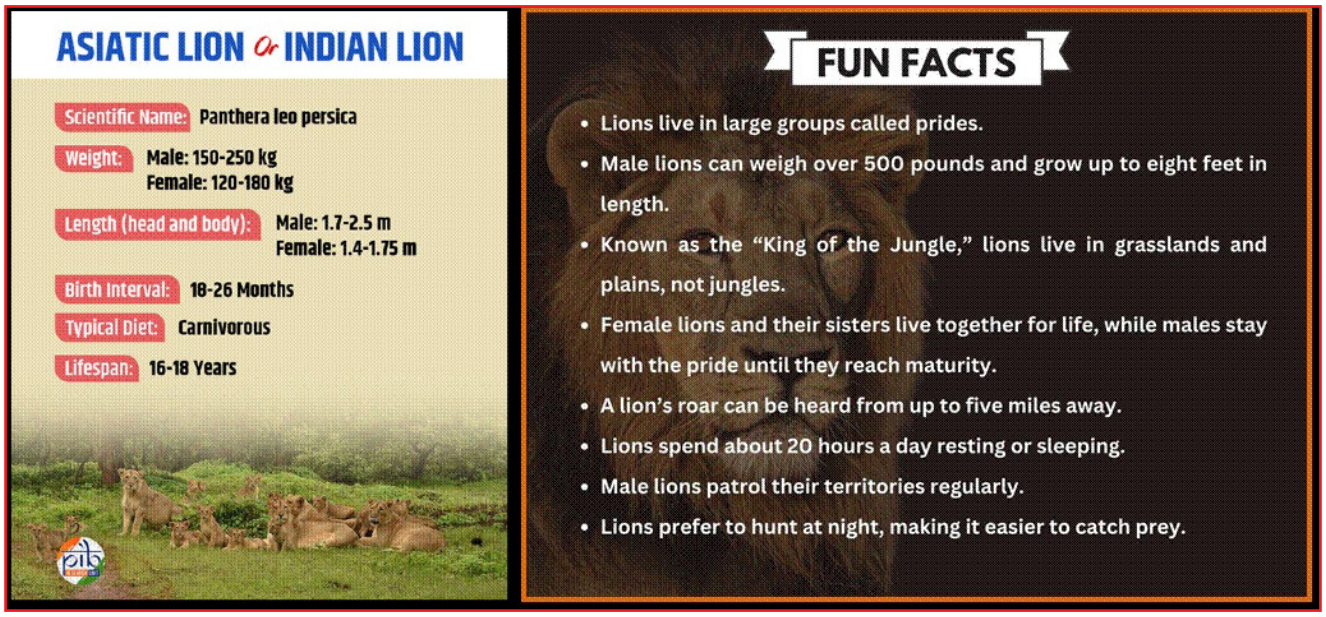

Rudrastra – Asia's Longest Freight Train

Why in News?

Indian Railways has achieved a significant milestone with the successful trial run of **Rudrastra,** the **longest freight train in India and Asia**, measuring 4.5 km.

Key Points

- **About:** On 7th August 2025, the **Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay (DDU) Division** of East Central Railway conducted a trial service between **Ganjkhwaja station in Chandauli (Uttar Pradesh) and Garhwa (Jharkhand),** covering 209 km in 5 hours 10 minutes at an **average speed of 40.5 km/h.**
  - The train, consisting of six BOXN rakes with **354 wagons**, was **powered by seven engines**—two at the front and one after every 59 bogies—carrying approximately **72 tonnes of goods per wagon**, marking the **largest freight load ever moved** by Indian Railways in a single operation.
  - The train ran on the **Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC)** from Ganjkhwaja to Sonnagar, and then on the normal track to Garhwa Road.
- **Significance:** Running Rudrastra as a unified system **reduces logistical overheads,** enhances train capacity, and boosts the speed and efficiency of freight transportation in India.

Kenya Eliminated Sleeping Sickness

Why in News?

The **World Health Organization (WHO)** has officially certified **Kenya as free from human African trypanosomiasis**—commonly known as **sleeping sickness**—marking a significant public health victory for the nation.

- With this achievement, **Kenya becomes the tenth country globally to eliminate the disease** as a public health challenge.

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- This is the **second** neglected tropical disease **eliminated in Kenya,** following the country's WHO certification as **Guinea worm disease-free in 2018**.

Key Points About Sleeping sickness

- **Sleeping sickness**, caused **by protozoan parasites** transmitted by **tsetse flies**, is characterized by **initial symptoms such as fever, headaches**, and joint pain.
- In advanced stages**, patients suffer from neurological effects, disrupted sleep patterns**, confusion, and behavioral changes.
  - The **sleeping sickness is endemic in sub-Saharan Africa.**
- Sleeping sickness significantly **reduces the productivity of both humans and cattle (zebu cattle** raised by **Maasai tribes** of eastern Africa**).**

Disease Eradicated by India

- **India has eradicated** Smallpox (1980), Polio (2014), **Plague, Rinderpest** (the Cattle Plague), **Yaws** and **Maternal And Neonatal Tetanus** (2015), **trachoma (2024)**.
  - India received Guinea worm **disease-free certification** status from the WHO in 2000.

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Diseases Targeted for Elimination in India

- **Malaria:** Achieve zero indigenous cases by 2030.
- **Lymphatic Filariasis (LF):** Achieve <1% microfilaria rate in endemic areas (elimination by 2030).
- **Kala-azar:** Achieve annual incidence of <1 case per 10,000 population at block level.
  - Certification requires 3 years of sustained elimination.
- **Tuberculosis (TB):** End TB by 2025 under the National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP).

Lucknow Invited to ASEAN Forum As Knowledge City

Why in News?

Officials of **Lucknow Municipal Corporation** were invited to attend the meeting of **ASEAN Governors & Mayors Forum (AGMF)** in Kuala Lumpur as a **'Knowledge City',** after gaining recognition for its initiatives in cleanliness, green development, and **sustainable urban management.**

Key Points

- **About:** The AGMF, originally the **ASEAN Mayors Forum (AMF) in 2011,** was founded to highlight **local contributions to ASEAN integration.**
  - In 2018, AMF was accredited as an entity associated with ASEAN, due to ASEAN member states' official recognition of its common goals and contribution to **ASEAN's community building.**

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- **Participants:** The AGMF is being held from **10th August 2025 to 15th August 2025,** bringing together governors, mayors, urban experts from Asia, and international organizations such as the German Corporation for International Cooperation **(GIZ), United Cities and Local Governments Asia Pacific (UCLG ASPAC)**, and United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific **(UNESCAP).**
- **Objective:** The forum aimed to **exchange knowledge on proven urban management** models, sustainable growth, climate action, and citizen participation.
- **Recognition:** Lucknow was **one of six Indian cities** selected to share its experiences in urban management at this prestigious event, marking a significant achievement in its journey towards sustainability and better urban governance.
  - Mayor **Sushma Kharkwal**, Municipal Commissioner **Gaurav Kumar**, and Additional Commissioner **Arvind Kumar Rao** presented the city's innovative projects.
  - Key projects highlighted during the event included the establishment of the **Shivri Solid Waste Processing Plant,** along with other initiatives.

Shivaji Memorial in Agra

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh government** has asserted its plan to construct a **memorial** dedicated to **Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj in Agra's Kothi Meena Bazar,** marking a significant step in **promoting tourism and cultural unity**.

Key Points

- The UP government **will fully fund the project,** with no external collaboration.
- Construction of the project will be **led by the Uttar Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation.**
- The government is **preparing to begin work on the memorial and museum**, with a focus on ensuring cultural and historical accuracy.

Key Monuments in Agra and Their Builders

- **Agra was founded by Sultan Sikandar Lodi of the Lodī dynasty in 1504.**
- **Agra Fort**
  - **Builder:** Akbar (initial construction), Shah Jahan (major structures)
  - **Prominent Buildings:**
    - **Moti Masjid:** Built by Shah Jahan
    - **Diwan-i-Aam (Hall of Public Audience):** Built by Shah Jahan
    - **Diwan-i-Khas (Hall of Private Audience):** Built by Shah Jahan
    - **Jahangiri Mahal:** Built by Akbar
    - **Sheesh Mahal (Turkish Bath):** Built by Shah Jahan
    - **Gardens:** Built in Charbagh style, typical of Mughal architecture
- **Tomb of Itmad-ud-Daula**
  - **Builder:** Noor Jahan (wife of Jahangir)
  - **Uniqueness:** First Mughal structure **made entirely of white marble**.
- **Taj Mahal (UNESCO World Heritage Site)**
  - **Builder:** Shah Jahan
  - **Uniqueness:** Finest example of Mughal architecture, built **in memory of Mumtaz Mahal (Arzuman Bano Begum)**. Known for its grandeur and opulence.

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj

- **About:** Born on **19th February 1630, at Shivneri Fort, Pune** was a visionary leader from the **Bhonsle clan** and the **founder of the Maratha Empire**, known for **resisting the Mughal Empire** and striving for self-rule.
- **Major Battles:** Battle of Pratapgad, Battle of Pavan Khind, **Sacking of Surat, Battle of Purandar, Battle of Sinhagad**, and Battle of Sangamner.
  - The **Wagh nakh**, was used by Shivaji **to kill Afzal Khan** in the 1659 Battle of Pratapgad.
- **Titles: Chhatrapati, Shakakarta, Kshatriya Kulavantas, and Haindava Dharmodhhaarak.**

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- **Administration:** Centralized administration with the **Ashtapradhan (Council of Eight Ministers),** abolished the Jagirdari System, implemented the Ryotwari System, and built a strong naval force for coastal defense.
  - **Shivaji** is renowned for his **innovative guerrilla warfare tactics**, which influenced subsequent rulers and shaped the Maratha Military Landscapes.

International Day Of the World's Indigenous Peoples

Why in News?

To mark the occasion of the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples, the **MP postal department,** in collaboration with the **Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya (IGRMS),** has organized a **three-day philatelic exhibition.**

- The event was inaugurated by Chief Postmaster General Vineet Mathur and Director of IGRMS, Prof. Amitabh Pande.

International Day of Indigenous Peoples

- **About:** Observed annually on 9th August, following the UN General Assembly's recognition of this day in **December 1994.**
  - The day recognizes the first meeting of the **United Nations Working Group** on Indigenous Populations in Geneva in 1982.
- **Theme for 2025:** "Indigenous Peoples and AI: Defending Rights, Shaping Futures."
- **Key Facts Related to Indigenous Peoples Globally:**
  - There are an estimated **476 million Indigenous Peoples** in the world living across 90 countries.
  - They make up less than **6% of the world's population,** but account for at least 15% of the poorest.
  - They speak an overwhelming majority of the world's estimated 7,000 languages and represent 5,000 different cultures.

2025 Equator Prize

- The UN Development Programme (UNDP) has announced the **ten Indigenous-led,** community-based organizations selected for the 2025 Equator Prize, recognizing their environmentally focused solutions that align with this **year's prize theme, "Nature for Climate Action."**
- **Bibifathima Swa Sahaya from India**, one of the winners, supports village farmers through **multi-cropping, seed bank**s, and solar-powered processing, blending traditional knowledge with regenerative agriculture and renewable energy.

Key Facts Related to Tribals in India

- **About:** In India, the term 'Adivasi' refers to various ethnic and tribal groups recognized as the aboriginal population, with Scheduled Tribes (STs) being those indigenous communities acknowledged by the government for special protection and support.
  - According to the 2011 census, these ancestral groups make up approximately 8.6% of India's general population, which adds up to around 104 million people.
- **Essential Characteristics:** According to the Lokur Committee (1965), the essential characteristics of the tribes are:
  - Indication of Primitive Traits
  - Distinctive Culture
  - Shyness of Contact with the Community at Large
  - Geographical Isolation
  - Backwardness
- **Constitutional Provisions for STs:**
  - **Article 15(4):** Special provisions for the advancement of other backward classes (it includes STs)
  - **Article 29:** Protection of Interests of Minorities (it includes STs)
  - **Article 46:** The State shall ensure the welfare of weaker sections (including Scheduled Tribes) and protect them from injustice and exploitation.

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- **Article 275:** Allocation of special funds from the Union Government to the State Government for enhancing the welfare and administration of Scheduled Tribes.
- **Article 350:** Right to conserve distinct language, script, or culture.
- **Article 330 and 332:** Reservation of seats for STs in Lok Sabha and State Legislatures.

Bijnor Jail Honors Sachindranath Bakshi

Why in News?

Sachindranath Bakshi, an unsung hero of the Kakori Train Action, has been **honored at his memorial in Bijnor Jail,** where he was once imprisoned after being sentenced to life imprisonment.

- The **memorial, named 'Smritika'**, was inaugurated on **11th August 2023** and includes a **statue of Bakshi**, along with the **engraved names of 419 freedom fighters** who were held in the jail during the British era.

Key Points

- **Role in Kakori Train Action (9th August 1925):** Bakshi, alongside revolutionaries Ashfaqullah Khan, **Chandrashekhar Azad** and **Rajendra Lahiri**, played a pivotal role in the **1925 Kakori Train Action**, where they looted the British treasury for the cause of India's independence (**procuring arms).**
  - **He attacked the guard's compartment** and seized a chest of money.
- **Bakshi's Contribution:** He had purchased the tickets and pulled the emergency chain, leading to the revolutionary act.
- **Bakshi's Legacy:** After his arrest, Bakshi was sentenced to life imprisonment, unlike his fellow revolutionaries who were executed.
  - His memoir, **'Kranti Ke Path Par'**, reflects his emotional turmoil about the disparity in their fates.
  - Later, he was released and continued to participate in politics after India's independence.
- **Historical Insight:** He led protests and hunger strikes (53 days) to **demand recognition for freedom fighters as political prisoners.**

Sachindranath Bakshi

- **Born:** 25th December 1904 (Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh)
- **Death:** 23rd November 1984 (Sultanpur, Uttar Pradesh)
- **Role:** Prominent freedom fighter, founder of **Hindustan Republican Army (HRA)**
- **HRA Formation:** 1924, aimed at armed struggle against British colonial rule
- **Initial Contributions:**
  - Propagated HRA ideals in **Varanasi**.
  - Moved to **Jhansi** to expand HRA's base.

Kannauj FSL Achieves ISO 9001:2015 Certification

Why in News?

The **Kannauj** Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) in Uttar Pradesh has become the **first laboratory in the state** to receive the prestigious **ISO 9001:2015 Quality Management System** certification.

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Key Points

- **About:** On 8 August 2025, the certificate was formally presented to **Rajeev Krishna**, the Director General of Police, Uttar Pradesh, by **Naveen Arora**, Additional Director General of Police, Technical Services Headquarters.
  - The certification recognizes the laboratory's high standards in forensic examinations and analysis, which significantly supports law enforcement agencies in the region.
  - The laboratory made **significant improvements** across various operational areas, such as upgraded equipment, storage, staff services, sample collection, and audits to meet ISO 9001:2015 standards.
- **Significance:** The certification not only **strengthens the operational framework** of the Kannauj laboratory but also **increases the credibility** of the forensic evidence it provides in judicial proceedings.

Forensic Laboratories in UP

- As of mid-2025, Uttar Pradesh (UP) has a **total of 12** (Lucknow, Varanasi, Agra, and Ghaziabad, Jhansi, Kannauj, Prayagraj, Gorakhpur, Bareilly, Gonda, Aligarh, and Moradabad) **operational forensic science laboratories** and is in the **process of establishing 6** (Ayodhya, Basti, Banda, Azamgarh, Mirzapur, and Saharanpur) more labs, which will raise the **total to at least 18 forensic labs in the state.**

ISO 9001:2015 Certification

- ISO 9001:2015 Certification is an **internationally recognized standard** for Quality Management Systems (QMS), published by the **International Organization for Standardization (ISO).**
  - **ISO** is an independent, **non-governmental international organization** that unites global experts to establish best practices.
- Organizations of any size or sector can pursue this certification to **demonstrate their ability to consistently provide products** and services that meet customer and regulatory requirements.
- The benefits include **boosted customer confidence**, improved efficiency, easier market access, and a structured approach for continuous business improvement.

Centenary Of Kakori Train Action

Why in News?

A hundred years ago, on **9th August 1925**, ten young revolutionaries, including **Ram Prasad Bismil**, and **Sachindranath Bakshi**, executed a daring heist on the British railway treasury, known as the Kakori Train Action.

- To honor the revolutionaries of the Kakori Train Action, **Uttar Pradesh has rebranded** its famous **Dussehri mangoes from the Kakori-Malihabad region** under the new name **'Kakori Brand.'**

Key Points About the Kakori Incident

- **Event:** The incident involved the **robbery of the Number 8 down passenger train (**from **Shahjahanpur to Lucknow)**.
  - The train was **carrying official British cash (railway collections)**, intended for use in revolutionary activities aimed at undermining British colonial rule.
- **Key Figures**: Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqullah Khan, Chandrashekhar Azad, Manmathnath Gupta, and Rajendra Nath Lahiri, all prominent members of the **Hindustan Republican Association (HRA).**
  - In this case 17 were jailed, 4 transported for life and **4 (Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqullah, Roshan Singh, and Rajendra Lahiri) were hanged.**
- **Impact on the Freedom Struggle:** The **Kakori Train Action** gave the **HRA** a much-needed financial boost, allowing it to expand and eventually transform into the **Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA)**, led by **Chandrashekhar Azad**.

HRA

- The **HRA was founded in October 1924 in Kanpur** by Ramprasad Bismil, Jogesh Chandra Chatterjee, and Sachin Sanyal, with an aim to **organise an armed revolution to overthrow the colonial government** and establish in its place the **Federal Republic of United States of India** whose basic **principle would be adult franchise.**

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HSRA

- The HSRA determined to **overcome the Kakori setback**, the younger revolutionaries, **inspired by socialist ideas**, set out to **reorganise Hindustan Republic Association** at a historic meeting **in the ruins of Ferozshah Kotla in Delhi** (September 1928).
- Under the **leadership of Chandrashekhar Azad,** the name of **HRA was changed to Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA).**
- The participants included **Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev Thapar, Bhagwati Charan Vohr**a from Punjab and Bejoy Kumar Sinha, Shiv Verma, and Jaidev Kapur from the United Provinces.
- The HSRA decided to work under a collective leadership and adopted socialism as its official goal.

World Elephant Day 2025

Why in News?

On 12th August 2025, the **Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC)**, in collaboration with the Tamil Nadu Forest Department, hosted the **World Elephant Day** celebration in **Coimbatore.**

- A specialized workshop on **Human-Elephant Conflict (HEC)** was also held, providing a platform for **elephant range states** to share challenges and discuss mitigation strategies, in line with **Project Elephant's** focus on community participation and scientific solutions to address human-elephant conflicts.
- A nationwide awareness program also aims to engage approximately 12 lakh school children from around 5,000 schools across India.

World Elephant Day

- World Elephant Day was co-founded on **12th August 2012,** by Canadian Patricia Sims and the **Elephant Reintroduction Foundation** of Thailand.
- Since its inception of global awareness building, it has partnerships with 100 elephant conservation organizations worldwide and reaches countless individuals across the globe.
- The theme for 2025 is **"Bringing the world together to help elephants".**
- **World Elephant Society,** established in November 2015 as a **nonprofit organization,** aims to support the annual World Elephant Day campaign.
  - The organization **educates the public** on global elephant conservation efforts, particularly around World Elephant Day.

Asian Elephant | African Savanna Elephant | African Forest Elephant

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Facts About Elephants

- **Three Species:** African savannah elephant, African forest elephant, and Asian elephant.
- **Size:** African savannah elephants are largest (up to 4 meters tall and 6,800 kg in weight).
- **Lifespan:** Wild elephants typically live 60 to 70 years of age.
- **Diet:** Elephants are herbivores
- **Trunk:** Their trunk is a versatile tool used for breathing, smelling, touching, grasping, and producing sound.
- **Tusks:** Elephant tusks are actually **enlarged incisor teeth** and can be found on elephants at 2 years old.
  - Elephants have been targeted for their ivory tusks, driving the illegal wildlife trade and causing severe declines in their populations.
- **Intelligence:** Elephants have the largest brain of any land animal.
- **Social Structure:** Female elephants live in family groups called herds, led by a matriarch.
- **Reproduction:** Elephant pregnancies last about 22 months, and calves weigh 200–300 pounds at birth.
- **Conservation Status (IUCN Red List Status):**
  - Asian elephants: **Endangered (EN)**
  - Savannah elephants: **Endangered (EN)**
  - Forest elephants: **Critically Endangered (CR)**

India's Role in Elephant Conservation

- India is home to **nearly 60% of the world's** wild elephant population.
- India has established **33 Elephant Reserves** and 150 identified Elephant Corridors, according to the Report on Elephant Corridors in India, 2023.
- India has granted elephants the status of **National Heritage Animal.**
- In India, Asian Elephants are categorized under **Schedule I** of the **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972**.

Deen Dayal SPARSH Yojana

Why in News?

The **Department of Posts has announced the Deen Dayal SPARSH (Scholarship for Promotion of Aptitude & Research in Stamps as a Hobby) Yojana** for the year 2025-26, offering **scholarships to students from classes 6 to 9.**

- The selected students will receive a **monthly scholarship of ₹500 to promote interest in philately**.

Key Points

- **Eligibility:** The scholarship will be **awarded based on academic performance**, results from a **quiz organized by the Department of Posts**, and a **philately project (**philately is the collection and study of Postage stamps).
  - Students who have **secured a minimum of 60%** marks or equivalent grades in the **previous year's examination are eligible** to apply.
  - A **5% relaxation will be given to students from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.**
  - To apply, **students must be members of their school's philately club,** or if such a club doesn't exist, they must have an individual philatelic deposit account.
  - Students can submit their **applications at the Philately Bureau at the General Post Office (GPO).**
- **Objective:** The **objective of the scholarship** is to **"Promote Philately among children at a young age** in a sustainable manner that can reinforce and **supplement the academic curriculum** in addition to providing a **hobby that can help them relax and de-stress".**
- **Significance:** Stamp collection **provides educational insight into the socio-economic and political context of its time**, serves as a stress-relieving hobby, fosters social connections, and enhances memory skills through organizing and cataloging information.

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India Post

- **Establishment:** On 1st October 1854 by **Lord Dalhousie (**Governor-General of British India)
- **Historical Timeline**
  - **1766:** Robert Clive set up postal system under East India Company (called "Company Mail")
  - **1774:** Warren Hastings opened Calcutta General Post Office- first public post office
  - **1854: Lord Dalhousie brought postal service under British Crown**
- **Current Network Size**
  - **Total Post Offices: 164,999 Post Offices (**Rural: 149,164 (90% of total) and Urban: 15,823)
  - **Global Status: World's largest postal network**
- **Organizational Structure**
  - **Ministry:** Ministry of Communications, Government of India
  - **Circles:** 23 postal circles across India
- **Services:**
  - Banking and financial services
  - Postal Life Insurance (PLI)
  - India Post Payments Bank
  - E-commerce and retail services
  - Government scheme disbursements (pensions, MGNREGA)

UP: Second Fastest Growing Economy

Why in News?

As per data of Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, **Uttar Pradesh (UP) has emerged as the second fastest-growing state** in India in terms of **Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP),** with its growth **rate accelerating from 5.5% to 8.9%.**

- **Tamil Nadu** holds the **top position** with a GSDP **growth rate of 11.19%.** Small states like Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya have also posted significant growth rates of 9.66%.

Key Points About Economic State of UP

- Uttar Pradesh ranks as **India's third-largest economy** after Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu (NITI Aayog).
  - UP has set an **ambitious goal of becoming a $1 trillion economy by 2029.**
  - It has **identified 10 key sectors critical to achieving this target**, with a focus on law and order, agriculture, infrastructure, industrial development, social security, and more.
- In **FY 2023–24, Uttar Pradesh's GSDP stood at ₹25.48 lakh crore**, up from ₹22.58 lakh crore in the previous fiscal year.
- The state experienced a **23% increase in per capita income** from FY 2016–17 to FY 2019–20.
- The **agriculture sector's contribution** to GSDP increased from 13.7% to **16.8% in FY 2023–24.**
  - Meanwhile, the **secondary sector** accounts for **23% of the GSDP**, while the **tertiary sector contributes 45%.**
- Uttar Pradesh **contributes 8% to India's national GDP.**

106th Birth Anniversary Of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai

Why in News?

Dr. Vikram Sarabhai (12th August 1919 - 30th December 1971), widely recognized as the **Father of India's Space Programme**, was remembered and celebrated on his **106th birth anniversary** on **12th August.**

Key Points

- **Early Life and Education:**
  - He was **born in Ahmedabad,** Gujarat, into an affluent Jain family. Sarabhai was one of eight children of Ambalal and Sarla Devi.
  - Undergraduate degree in **Physics and Mathematics** from Cambridge University.
  - Pursued a PhD under Nobel laureate C.V. Raman **at IISc, Bangalore,** with the thesis titled **"Time Distribution of Cosmic Rays,"** published in 1942.

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- **Institutional Legacy:**
  - **Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), Ahmedabad:** Founded in 1947, PRL marked the beginning of Sarabhai's journey in institution building.
  - **Indian Institute of Management (IIM), Ahmedabad:** Played a pivotal role in its creation.
  - **Community Science Centre, Ahmedabad:** Founded in 1966 to promote science education.
  - **Darpan Academy for Performing Arts, Ahmedabad:** Co-founded with his wife, Mrinalini Swaminathan.
  - **Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Thiruvananthapuram:** A hub for India's space missions.
- **Contributions to Indian Space and Nuclear Programs:**
  - **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO):** He founded the **ISRO**, emphasizing the importance of space technology for societal development.
  - **Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE):** Conceptualized with NASA, **SITE** beamed educational programs to rural areas, laying the foundation for programs like **Doordarshan's Krishi Darshan.**
  - **Aryabhata Satellite:** Initiated the fabrication of **India's first satellite, Aryabhata**, launched in 1975 from a Russian cosmodrome.
  - **Atomic Energy Commission:** Took over as chairman after Homi Bhabha's death, advancing **nuclear science.**
- **Awards and Honors:**
  - **Awards:**
    - **Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Award** (1962)
    - **Padma Bhushan** (1966)
    - **Padma Vibhushan** (posthumously, 1972)
  - **Distinguished Positions:**
    - President, Physics Section, Indian Science Congress (1962)
    - President, General Conference of the IAEA, Vienna (1970)
    - Vice-President, Fourth UN Conference on Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy (1971)
  - **Title: Mahatma Gandhi** of Indian Science (By former President **APJ Abdul Kalam**).
  - **Legacy:**
    - **Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC)** was named in his honor.
    - A lunar crater, **"Sarabhai Crater,"** was named after him.

UP's MSME Industrial Estate Management Policy 2025

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has given its approval for the **Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Industrial Estate Management Policy (2025)**, designed to promote industrial growth by **simplifying land allocation and improving** facilities for businesses.

- The new policy is set to replace 19 outdated government orders issued since 1978.

Key Features of the Policy

- **Land Allocation**: Land, sheds, and plots in industrial estates will be allocated via lease/rent through auction or e-auction modes.
  - Successful bidders will pay 10% of the reserved price as earnest money, with the remaining balance payable in lump sum or installments over one to three years. Immediate payments will be eligible for a 2% discount.
- **Reservation for SC/ST Entrepreneurs**: **10% of all plots and sheds** will be reserved **for SC/ST entrepreneurs.**
  - If no eligible applicant comes forward, the plots may be reallocated to other categories to ensure continuous development.
- **Price Structure**: The policy introduces fixed reserved prices for industrial plots in various regions for FY 2025-26, including Madhyanchal, Pashchimanchal, Bundelkhand and Purvanchal.

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- The rates will increase by 5% annually, starting from 1st April each year.

- **Preferential Rates for Anchor Units**: Special rates may be offered to anchor units expected to drive significant MSME growth in the estates.
- **Infrastructure Facilities**: Industrial estates will be equipped with essential amenities, including common facility centers, power substations, fire stations, women's hostels, dormitories, crèches, eco-friendly parks, training institutes, and health services.
- **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)**: The **Commissioner and Director of Industries will oversee the implementation of SOPs** for land allocation, property transfer, revitalization, subletting, and surrender.

Classification	Micro	Small	Medium
Manufacturing and Services Enterprises	**Investment:** Not more than Rs. 2.5 crore **Annual Turnover:** not more than Rs. 10 crore	**Investment:** Not more than Rs. 25 crore **Annual Turnover:** Not more than Rs. 100 crore	**Investment:** Not more than Rs. 125 crore **Annual Turnover:** Not more than Rs. 500 crore

Mega Tinkering Day 2025

Why in News?

In a **first-of-its-kind** nationwide innovation movement, the **Atal Innovation Mission (AIM), NITI Aayog,** hosted **Mega Tinkering Day 2025**, marking a significant milestone in India's innovation landscape.

Key Points

- **About:** The nationwide event brought together over **10,000 Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs)** across all **35 states and Union Territories** of India.
  - The event witnessed **4,73,350 students** from **9,467 ATL-equipped schools** participating in a hands-on challenge to design and build a do-it-yourself **(DIY) vacuum cleaner** using everyday materials from their labs.
- **Event Format:**
  - **Virtual & Simultaneous**: The event was **held virtually** and simultaneously in schools **across India**, with regional participation across North (Leh, Ladakh, Kargil, Kashmir), South (Kanniyakumari), West (Bhuj, Kutch), East (Manipur, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh), and **Aspirational Districts** (Virudhunagar).
  - **Collaborative Learning**: The online format enabled students to **collaborate in real-time,** despite geographical distances.

Atal Innovation Mission

- **About:** Launched by NITI Aayog in 2016, AIM **promotes innovation and entrepreneurship** by fostering a problem-solving mindset in students and strengthening the entrepreneurial ecosystem in **universities and research institutions.**
  - **AIM 2.0 aims to scale and pilot new initiatives** to expand and strengthen India's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem, building on the success of AIM.

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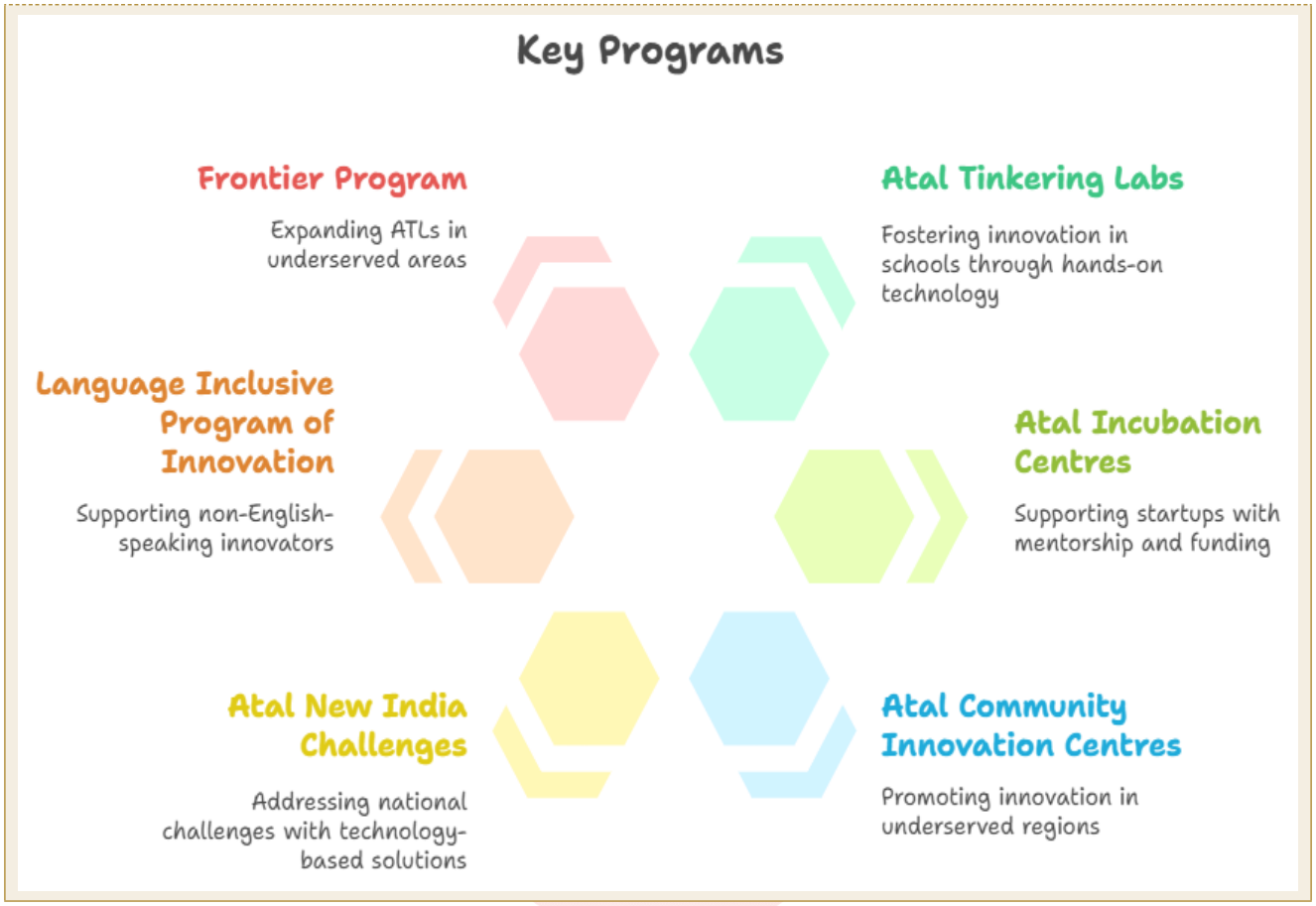

18th International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics

Why in News?

The **18th International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics (IOAA)** is being held at Mumbai, India, from 11th to 21st August 2025.

- This is the **second time that India is hosting the IOAA,** after the **2016 edition in Bhubaneswar.**

Key Points

- **About:** The **IOAA** is an **annual competition** for secondary school students (Classes 10 to 12), featuring a rigorous selection process to qualify for the **international level.**
  - The IOAA was **conceived in 2006** to address the increasing global interest in astronomy among high school students, with its **first edition** held in **Chiang Mai, Thailand, in 2007.**
- **Organiser:** The event is organised by the **Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (HBCSE),** an autonomous institution under the umbrella of the Department of Atomic Energy.
  - It is also supported by the Government of India through its **Department of Atomic Energy (DAE)** via the **Vigyan Pratibha Project** of HBCSE.
- **Theme of the Olympiad:** The theme for this year's event is **'Vasudaiva Kutumbakam'**, reflecting the ancient Indian idea that **"the world is one family under the one sky"**.

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- **Logo:** The **IOAA 2025 logo features the Gateway of India**, a **GSLV rocket** representing **India's lunar mission**, a spider symbolizing telescopes in the letter **"O",** tri-coloured comets above the Gateway, and a colour scheme inspired by the **Milky Way galaxy.**

- **Participants:** The Olympiad has attracted **over 300 high school students** from **64 countries**. During the event, students participate in several **challenging exams** covering **theoretical**, **observational**, and **data analysis** aspects of astronomy.

Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (HBCSE)

- HBCSE is a **National Centre of the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research**, which is a Deemed University in Mumbai.
- HBCSE is the **nodal centre** of Olympiad programmes in mathematics, physics, astronomy, chemistry, and biology.
- Another important programme of HBCSE is the **National Initiative on Undergraduate Science (NIUS),** concerning tertiary science education in India.

Astronomy

- Astronomy is the science that **studies celestial objects** such as stars, planets, comets, galaxies, and the universe as a whole.

Astrophysics

- Astrophysics is a branch of astronomy that **uses the principles and laws of physics** (such as gravity, thermodynamics), to **understand and explain the physical processes** that govern how celestial objects behave, form, and evolve.

Alert for Bird Flu in UP

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh has issued a **state-wide alert** due to the growing **threat of Bird Flu (H5N1),** directing relevant departments to implement strict safety protocols to protect animals and birds, especially in zoos and wildlife sanctuaries.

- CM Yogi has instructed to **reinforce safety measures in zoos, bird sanctuaries, national parks**, wetlands, and cow shelters to prevent any outbreak of Bird Flu.

Key Facts About Bird Flu

- **About: Bird flu (avian influenza)** is a highly contagious viral disease **caused by avian influenza A viruses,** particularly subtypes **H5N1 and H5N8**, affecting both wild and domestic birds.
- **History of Human Cases: First human cases** were reported in **1997 (Hong Kong).** Most have occurred in Asia and were linked to close contact with infected birds.
- **Transmission:** H5N1 spreads primarily **through direct contact with infected live or dead birds** or contaminated environments (e.g., live bird markets).
  - **Human infections of H5N1** are **rare**, with a **high fatality rate** (~60%), much **higher than Covid-19** (~3%).
  - **Transmission from mammals to humans** has been observed, **but airborne and sustained human-to-human transmission are not confirmed**.
    - H5N1 is listed as a priority disease under WHO R&D Blueprint.
- **Symptoms:** Common symptoms include high fever, cough, sore throat, and muscle aches.
  - Severe cases can **lead to respiratory failure or neurological complications**. Some individuals may remain asymptomatic despite exposure.
- **Treatment:** Current seasonal flu vaccines do not protect against H5N1.
  - **Antiviral drugs** like oseltamivir are effective, especially when administered early in high-risk or severe cases.

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Types of Influenza Virus

Type	Hosts	Impact on Humans	Key Features	Public Health Relevance
Influenza A	Humans, birds, pigs, other animals	High – causes pandemics and severe epidemics	Subtypes (H1N1, H5N1) based on HA & NA proteins	Major global concern; pandemic potential
Influenza B	Humans	Moderate – seasonal flu outbreaks	Two lineages: B/Yamagata and B/Victoria; slower mutation	Seasonal flu impact; affects vulnerable groups
Influenza C	Humans (rare)	Low – mild respiratory illness	No epidemics; long-lasting immunity	Limited concern; self-limiting
Influenza D	Cattle and other animals	None	No human infections; animal monitoring	Veterinary relevance; no human threat

Third President's Gallantry Medal to Ajay Sahni

Why in News?

Senior IPS officer **Ajay Kumar Sahni**, known for leading 52 encounters, has been awarded the **President's Medal for Gallantry** for the **third time** in his career.

- **Sahni, a 2009-batch officer** from the Uttar Pradesh cadre, was **honored with the President's Medal** for his exceptional courage during a high-risk operation in **Meerut on Republic Day (26th January 2020),** praised for his gallantry, leadership, and dedication under life-threatening circumstances.

Gallantry Awards

- **About:** They are given to the **personnel for displaying raw courage,** unparalleled bravery and total disregard to personal safety in the line of duty.
  - These gallantry awards are **announced twice in a year,** first on the occasion of the **Republic Day** and then on the occasion of the **Independence Day.**
- **Types:**
  - **Gallantry Awards in the Face of the Enemy:**
    - **Param Vir Chakra (PVC)** for most conspicuous bravery
    - **Mahavir Chakra (MVC)** for acts of gallantry
    - **Vir Chakra** for acts of bravery
  - **Gallantry Awards Other than in the Face of the Enemy:**
    - Includes **Ashoka Chakra**, **Kirti Chakra**, and **Shaurya Chakra**.

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- **Order of precedence of the Awards:**
  - Param Vir Chakra
  - Ashoka Chakra
  - Mahavir Chakra
  - Kirti Chakra
  - Vir Chakra
  - Shaurya Chakra

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UP Police's 'Operation Savera'

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh Police** has launched **'Operation Savera' in the Saharanpur region** to curb drug trafficking and promote a drug-free society.

- The initiative, directed by **CM Yogi Adityanath** and **DGP Rajeev Krishna**, targets the entire chain of illegal narcotics, from manufacturers to peddlers.

Key Points

- **Objective:** The operation focuses on **illegal drug manufacturers, intermediaries, suppliers, and peddlers** across the three districts of the Saharanpur range.
  - Police will **dismantle trafficking networks**, targeting both **forward and backward linkages** of the drug trade.
- **Legal Mandate:** Strict legal action will be taken under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985, and Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (PITNDPS) Act, 1988, including **confiscation of properties** acquired through illicit drug activities.
  - Ongoing NDPS cases will be reviewed to ensure **convictions of guilty persons**.
- **Awareness: Awareness campaigns** will educate society, especially **students**, about the harmful effects of drug abuse.
  - Visits to **de-addiction centers** are planned to assess facilities and challenges, and coordinate with departments for **rehabilitation support**.

Note: Earlier, the **Kanpur Police had launched 'Operation Mahakal'** on 5th August 2025 to **crack down on the land mafia, extortion gangs**, and influential individuals supporting them.

UP's 1st Green Hydrogen Plant

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath **inaugurated the state's first green hydrogen plant** and the **second of its kind in the country** at **Khanimpur village, Gorakhpur district.**

India's Green Hydrogen Milestones

- Kandla Port **in Gujarat** is the site of **India's first Make-in-India Green Hydrogen Plant,** advancing the country's Net-Zero goals.
- Jindal Stainless Limited in Hisar is **India's first off-grid green hydrogen plant** dedicated to the **stainless steel industry,** making it a global first for the sector.
- **Adani Group** commissioned **India's first off-grid 5 MW** green hydrogen pilot plant in **Kutch, Gujarat,** pioneering renewable-powered hydrogen production.

Key Points

- **About:** The plant, set up by **Torrent Gas and Torrent Power,** marks a significant milestone in India's transition to clean energy.
  - As part of a pilot project, the plant will blend up to **2% green hydrogen with** natural gas (CNG and PNG), which will be supplied to domestic households, CNG stations, and industries via the local gas grid.
- **Significance:** The project is the **largest** green hydrogen and natural gas blending initiative in the country's city gas distribution sector, expected to **cut** carbon emissions by 500 tonnes annually and establish Uttar Pradesh as a key hub for green hydrogen due to its abundant water resources.
- **Green Hydrogen Policy:** The Uttar Pradesh Green Hydrogen Policy 2024 enables Ease of Doing Business by promoting investments and setting up of Green Hydrogen / Green Ammonia production facilities and Green Hydrogen-based product manufacturing units.
  - Uttar Pradesh envisions taking the production capacity of Green Hydrogen / Green Ammonia up to **1 million metric tonnes per year by 2028.**
  - The policy includes a **30% capital subsidy,** which can go up to 40% for the first four projects in the state.

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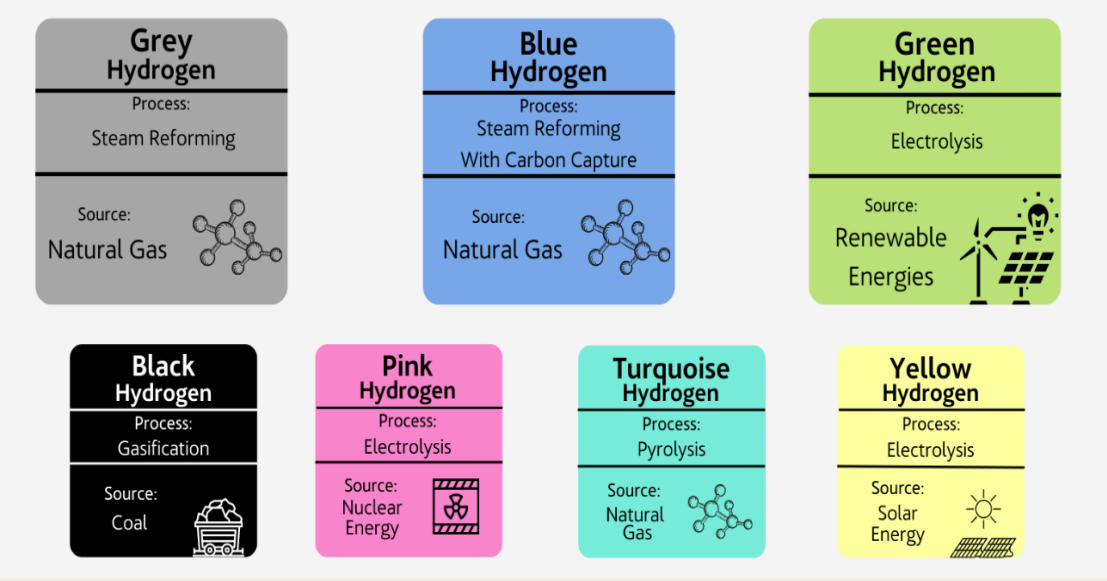
Green Hydrogen

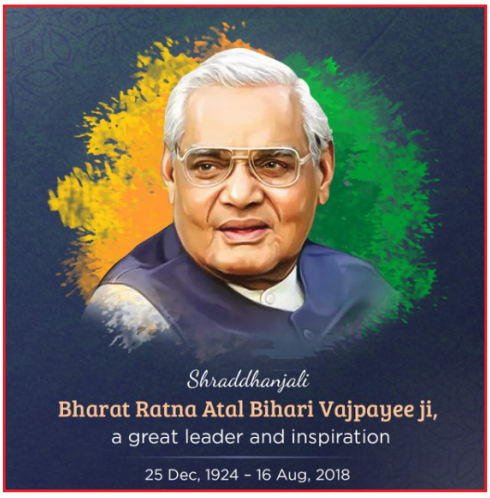
- Green hydrogen is produced by splitting water into **hydrogen (H_2) and oxygen (O_2)** through **electrolysis powered** by renewable energy sources like solar power, or via biomass gasification.
- Its uses include **fuel cell electric vehicles (FCEVs)**, industrial uses such as fertilizers and the refineries sector, and transportation sectors like road and rail.
- **Other Types of Hydrogen:**



Death Anniversary Of Atal Bihari Vajpayee

Why in News?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, along with **President Droupadi Murmu** and other dignitaries, paid floral tributes to former Prime Minister **Atal Bihari Vajpayee** on his **seventh death anniversary (16th Aug)** at his memorial, **'Sadaiv Atal'**, in New Delhi.



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Key Points About Atal Bihari Vajpayee

- **Atal Bihari Vajpayee:** Born on 25th December, 1924 in the **erstwhile princely state of Gwalior** (now a part of Madhya Pradesh).
  - He entered in national politics during the **Quit India Movement (1942)** which hastened the end of British colonial rule.
- **Professional Career:** In 1947, Vajpayee started working as a journalist for newspapers of **Deendayal Upadhyaya — Rashtradharma** (a Hindi monthly), **Panchjanya** (a Hindi weekly) and the dailies **Swadesh and Veer Arjun.**
  - Later, influenced by **Syama Prasad Mookerjee,** Vajpayee joined the **Bharatiya Jana Sangh in 1951.**
- **Political Journey:** He served as **India's Prime Minister three times** (1996; 1998–2004): **first term** (16th May – 1st June **1996, about 13 days**), **second term** (19th March 1998 – 13th October 1999), **and third term** (13th October 1999 – 22nd May 2004).
  - He was elected **nine times to the Lok Sabha** and **twice to the Rajya Sabha**.
- **Awards and Recognition:** He was conferred with the **country's highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna in 2015** and second-highest civilian honour, the **Padma Vibhushan in 1994.**
  - As a parliamentarian, Vajpayee was awarded with the **Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant Award for Best Parliamentarian in 1994,** which defines him as "a role model par excellence for all legislators."
  - His birthday is observed as **Good Governance Day.**
- **Demise:** A revered former Prime Minister, he passed away on 16th August 2018.
- **Key Achievements:**
  - He launched the **Golden Quadrilateral Project**, creating a network of four national highways connecting Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, and Kolkata.
  - Through **second-generation economic reforms,** he liberalized India's economy, fostering industrial growth and attracting foreign investment.
  - He led the nation during the **Pokhran Nuclear Tests (1998)**, which established India as a nuclear power while emphasizing peace and non-aggression.
  - He inaugurated **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)** in 2000 **for better connectivity and transportation** in **rural India.**

Eternal Flame Of Homeopathy Award to Dr PK Shukla

Why in News?

Senior homeopathic physician **Dr PK Shukla** from Lucknow was awarded the **Eternal Flame of Homeopathy Award** for his outstanding contributions to homeopathy.

- The award was presented by cricketing legend **Sunil Gavaskar** at the **4th All India Homeopathy Research Summit 2025**, held on **16th August 2025** at **JW Marriott, Goa**, and organised by **Burnet Homeopathy Private Limited**.

Homeopathy

- Homeopathy is a medical system that **stimulates the body's natural healing ability, using highly diluted substances** to enhance effects and reduce side effects.
- Introduced in India in the 18th century, **World Homeopathy Day** is observed every **10th April** to honor its founder, **Dr. Hahnemann**.

Note: **Crosspathy** is the practice where **healthcare professionals provide treatments or prescribe medicines beyond their recognized expertise**, such as AYUSH practitioners (Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Homeopathy) performing procedures or prescribing drugs usually reserved for allopathic (modern) medicine.

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AYUSH Systems of Medicine

AYUSH encompasses Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa, and Homeopathy, with Ayurveda having a documented history of 5000+ years.

Ayurveda

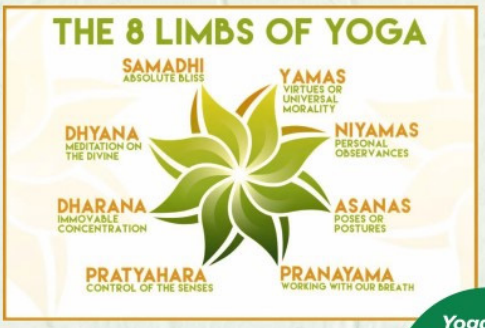
Lord Brahma is believed to be the 1st proponent of Ayurveda

- **Samhita Period (1000 BC):** Emerged as mature medical system
  - **Charaka Samhita:** Oldest and most authoritative text
  - **Sushruta Samhita:** Gives fundamental principles and therapeutic methods in eight specialties
- **Main Schools:**
  - **Punarvasu Atreya -** School of physicians
  - **Divodasa Dhanvantari -** School of surgeons

Branches of Ayurveda:

- Kayachikitsa (internal medicine)
- Shalya Tantra (surgery)
- Shalakya Tantra (disease of supra-clavicular origin)
- Kaumarabhritya (paediatrics)
- Agada Tantra (toxicology)
- Bhootavidya (psychiatry)
- Rasayana Tantra (rejuvenation and geriatrics)
- Vajikarana (eugenics & science of aphrodisiac)

Yoga & Naturopathy



Yoga first propounded by Maharishi Patanjali in systematic form Yogsutra

- **Naturopathy:** Healing with help of 5 natural elements - Earth, Water, Air, Fire and Ether
  - Based on theories of self-healing capacity of body and principles of healthy living
  - Encourages a **person-centred approach** rather than disease-centred

Unani

Pioneered in Greece, developed by Arabs as 7 principles (Umoor-e-Tabbiya)

- Based on the framework of teachings of **Buqrat** (Hippocrates) and **Jalinoos** (Galen)
  - Hippocratic theory of **four humors** viz. blood, phlegm, yellow bile, and black bile
- **Recognised by WHO** and granted official status by India as an alternative health system

Siddha

Dates back to 10000 – 4000 BC; Siddhar Agasthiyar - Father of Siddha Medicine

- Preventive, promotive, curative, rejuvenative, and rehabilitative health care
- **4 Components:** Latro-chemistry, Medical practice, Yogic practice & Wisdom
- Diagnosis based on 3 humors **(Mukkuttram)** and 8 vital tests **(Ennvagai Thervu)**

Sowa Rigpa

Origin: Lord Buddha in India before 2500 years

- Traditional medicine in Himalayan regions of Ladakh, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, etc.
- Recognised in India by Indian Medicine Central Council Act,1970 (As amended in 2010)

Homeopathy

German physician Dr. Christian F. S. Hahnemann codified its fundamental principles

- Medicines prepared mainly from natural substances (plant products, minerals, animal sources)
- Brought in India by European missionaries - 1810; official recognition - 1948
- **3 Key Principles:**
  - *Similia Similibus Curentur* (let likes be cured by likes)
  - Single Medicine
  - Minimum Dose

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UP Universities Shine on Sodhganga Portal

Why in News?

On University Grants Commission's (UGC) **Sodhganga portal, three universities** from **Uttar Pradesh** secured places among the country's **Top 10 institutions** in terms of uploaded research theses.

Key Points

- On the **Shodhganga portal, which hosts over 6,20,000 theses from 840 universities nationwide**, **Uttar Pradesh's institutions** have emerged as significant contributors, with **Aligarh Muslim University (AMU), Kanpur University, and Banaras Hindu University (BHU)** securing prominent positions—underscoring the state's growing emphasis on higher education, research, and academic excellence.
- **Top 10 National Universities:**
  - Anna University (17028 theses)
  - University of Madras (15396)
  - University of Calcutta (14837)
  - Savitribai Phule Pune University (13403)
  - University of Mumbai (12527)
  - Andhra University (10736)
  - Aligarh Muslim University (10709): 7th among top contributors (1st in UP).
  - Chhatrapati Sahuji Maharaj University (10279): 8th among top contributors (2nd in UP).
  - Panjab University (9890)
  - Banaras Hindu University (9600): (3rd in UP).
- **Other UP Universities' Contributions:**
  - **Lucknow University:** 8,683 theses
  - **Chaudhary Charan Singh University, Meerut:** 3,645 theses
  - **Bundelkhand University:** 2,335 theses
  - **Pt. Deendayal Upadhyay Gorakhpur University:** 1,161 theses
  - **Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam Technical University, Lucknow:** 462 theses

Shodhganga: A Digital Repository of Indian Theses

- **About:** Shodhganga is a digital **repository of Indian electronic theses and dissertations**, hosted and maintained by the **INFLIBNET Centre**.
  - It provides open access to M.Phil. and Ph.D. research, ensuring wider visibility, reducing duplication, and enhancing research quality across Indian universities.
- **Mandate:** Under the **UGC (Minimum Standards & Procedure for Award of M.Phil./Ph.D. Degree) Regulation, 2009 (amended 2016)**, all researchers are required to submit electronic versions of their theses to facilitate global access and preservation.
- **Significance:**
  - "Shodh" means research; "Ganga" symbolizes India's rich cultural heritage. Together, Shodhganga represents the reservoir of Indian intellectual output.
  - It prevents duplication of research, promotes quality, and preserves scholarly work digitally.
- **University Integration:**
  - Universities can maintain their own institutional repositories while using Shodhganga as a central backup.
  - Metadata from distributed repositories is harvested centrally to provide unified access to all theses.

153rd Birth Anniversary Of Sri Aurobindo

Why in News?

On 15th August 2025, PM Narendra Modi paid tribute to the philosopher and freedom fighter Sri Aurobindo on his **153rd birth anniversary**, acknowledging his profound impact on India's nation-building journey.

- He highlighted that **Aurobindo's philosophy and spirituality guided** the nation's growth toward realizing its potential.

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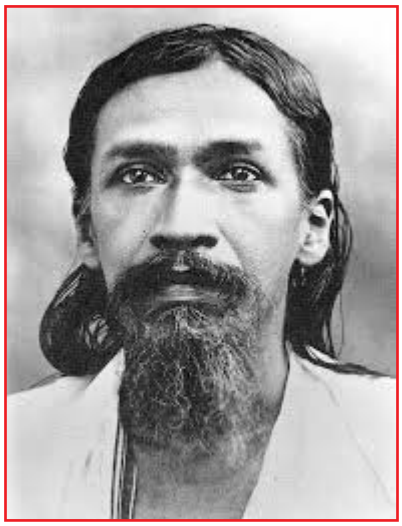

Key Facts About Sri Aurobindo

- **About:** Aurobindo Ghose was born in **Calcutta on 15th August 1872.** He was a yogi, seer, philosopher, poet, and Indian nationalist who propounded a philosophy of divine life on earth through spiritual evolution.
  - He died on 5th December 1950 in Pondicherry.
- **Education:**
  - His education **began in a Christian convent school** in Darjeeling.
  - He entered the **University of Cambridge,** where he became proficient in two classical and several modern European languages.
  - He **returned to India in February 1893** at the age of twenty-one and **commenced his service in the Baroda State.**
  - He began the study of **Yoga and Indian languages, including classical Sanskrit.**
- **Indian Revolutionary Movement: From 1902 to 1910, he partook in the struggle** to free India from the British. As a result of his political activities, he was **imprisoned in 1908 (Alipore Bomb case).**
- **Spirituality:** In Pondichéry, he **founded a community of spiritual seekers (1910)**, which took shape as the **Sri Aurobindo Ashram in 1926.**
  - He believed that the **basic principles of matter, life, and mind would be succeeded through terrestrial evolution** by the principle of supermind as an intermediate power between the two spheres of the infinite and the finite.
- **Literary Works:**
  - In 1906, he became the **editor of Bande Mataram**, an English newspaper (founded by Bipin Chandra Pal in 1905).
  - Bases of Yoga
  - Bhagavad Gita and Its Message
  - The Future Evolution of Man
  - Rebirth and Karma
  - Savitri: A Legend and a Symbol
  - Hour of God
- **The Five Dreams of Sri Aurobindo:** In 1947, upon India's independence, Aurobindo shared his five dreams, which included **a free and united India, the resurgence of Asia, a global union for a fairer life, India's spiritual gift to the world, and a transformative step in human evolution towards higher consciousness and societal perfection.**
- **Auroville:** Auroville, founded **by Mirra Alfassa (The Mother) in 1968**, is an **experimental township in Pondicherry** that embodies **Aurobindo's vision of a global, spiritually** united community.
  - **Endorsed by UNESCO in 1966**, it emphasizes sustainable living and addresses humanity's future cultural, environmental, social, and spiritual needs.

Karikot Village Wins ICRT Award 2025

Why in News?

Karikot village, located in the **Bahraich** district of Uttar Pradesh, has been selected for the prestigious **Indian Subcontinental Responsible Tourism (ICRT) Award 2025.**

- This award is presented by the **ICRT India Foundation** and is supported by the **Ministry of Tourism.**

Key Points

- **ICRT Award 2025:** The award honors leaders in sustainable tourism, emphasizing the reduction of

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negative impacts and the enhancement of positive ones, and will be presented in **New Delhi** on 13th September 2025.

- **Categories:** The awards ceremony will recognize institutions under various categories, like **One to Watch, Silver, and Gold**.
- **Criteria:** The panel evaluated entries based on **authenticity, replicability, community involvement,** and long-term impact.
  - Karikot stood out for its **innovative and community-driven approach** to rural tourism, making it a prime example of sustainability and impact.

- **Karikot Village Model:** Karikot, located near the India-Nepal border and adjacent to the Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary, sees tourism initiatives driven primarily by the Tharu tribal **community,** focusing on homestays, eco-tourism, and cultural immersion experiences.
  - These initiatives have helped revive traditional Tharu crafts, cuisine, and **folk arts**, turning Karikot into a living museum of Tharu heritage.
  - Karikot's community-driven and sustainable tourism model has created **long-term benefits** and new livelihood opportunities, especially for **women and youth.**
- **Uttar Pradesh's Rural Tourism Strategy**: **Karikot**'s recognition underscores the state's effort to make rural tourism a key development focus, supported by initiatives like the **UP Bed & Breakfast and Homestay Policy 2025** and **eco-tourism promotion.**

Tharu Tribe

- **Meaning of 'Tharu':** The word tharu is believed to be derived from sthavir, meaning followers of Theravada Buddhism.
- **Habitat:** The Tharu community belongs to the **Terai lowlands,** amid the Shivaliks or lower Himalayas.
  - Terai is a region of northern India and southern Nepal running parallel to the lower ranges of the Himalayas.
  - The Tharus live in both India and Nepal. In the Indian terai, they live mostly in Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar.
- **Scheduled Tribe:** Tharu is a scheduled tribe in the states of Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar.
- **Occupation:** Most of them are forest dwellers, and some practice agriculture.
- **Language:** They speak various dialects of Tharu, a language of the **Indo-Aryan subgroup,** and variants of Hindi, Urdu, and Awadhi.

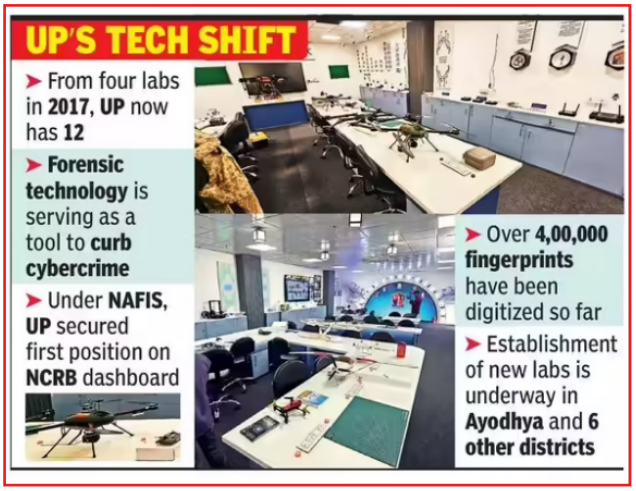
ICRT India Foundation

- ICRT India Foundation was founded in 2017 to support and expand **Responsible Tourism in India.**
- It backs the **Cape Town Declaration of Responsible Tourism (2002)** and promotes its principles.
- The Foundation signed and supports the **2022 Responsible Tourism Charte**r, signed on Magna Carta Island.

India's 1st Drone Forensic Lab

Why in News?

In a first-of-its-kind initiative in the country, a drone **forensic lab** has been established at the **Uttar Pradesh State Institute of Forensic Science (UPSIFS) in Lucknow**.



Key Points

- **About:** The lab was inaugurated by **Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister** Yogi Adityanath and is conceptualized

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and established by **Milind Raj,** an expert in robotics and drone technology, also known as the **'Drone Man of India.'**

- **Functions:** The lab will enable police to **track, decode, and investigate drones** in real-time, helping forensic experts determine the **drone's flight path, take-off location,** payload capacity, and potential hazards like explosives.
  - It will facilitate **forensic postmortems of drones** to assess their intent and threat potential, helping law enforcement understand drones used in **unlawful activities.**
- **Training:** The lab will serve as a **training center for police personnel** and forensic experts, offering hands-on experience with **unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).**
  - It will help build a **dedicated drone force within UP Police**, enabling swift responses to incidents involving drones for security surveillance, crowd monitoring, and potential criminal activities.
- **Technological Innovation and Future Impact:** The lab is equipped with advanced data acquisition tools, **reverse-engineering systems,** customized kits, and hi-tech computing systems, making it possible to trace and analyze drones used in unlawful activities.
- **Applications:** The lab's applications include **safeguarding sensitive zones like borders,** prisons, and airports, as well as aiding in **disaster management** and search-and-rescue operations.

Varanasi: India's First City to Install Solar Panels Between Railway Tracks

Why in News?

Varanasi is the first city in India to install **portable solar panels** between railway tracks, promoting **sustainable energy.**

- This **pilot project** at Banaras Locomotive Works (BLW) supports Indian Railways' goal of reducing its **carbon footprint** and achieving **net-zero emissions.**

Key Points

- **About:** The installation features **solar panel system spanning 70 meters** of railway track, with **28 panels of 15 kWp capacity,** generating **880 units** per kilometre daily and a power density of 220 kWp per kilometre.
- **Panel Design:** The solar panels are **removable for easy maintenance** and seasonal adaptation, mounted on sleepers with an indigenously designed installation procedure to ensure secure and safe attachment without disrupting train traffic.
  - Rubber mounting pads reduce vibrations from passing trains, epoxy adhesive secures the panels, and the space between tracks eliminates the need for extra land acquisition.
- **Environmental and Operational Impact:**
  - **Energy Generation Potential:** The scheme is expected to produce an estimated **3.21 lakh units per kilometre** per year.
  - **Indian Railways Network:** With a track length of **1.2 lakh km**, this technology has the potential to be deployed extensively across the network, especially on yard lines.
    - The solar panels complement existing **rooftop solar power plants** installed within BLW premises, further strengthening Indian Railways' renewable energy commitment.

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Chevening-Atal Bihari Vajpayee Scholarship Scheme

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has signed a **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the **United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO)** for the **Chevening-Atal Bihari Vajpayee Uttar Pradesh State Government Scholarship Scheme.**

Key Points

- **About:** The MoU was signed in Lucknow by **Lindy Cameron**, the British High Commissioner to India, in the presence of **Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath**.
  - The UP Cabinet recently approved the scheme, with the state government **allocating Rs 2 crore** for the program in the current financial year (2025-26).
  - The scheme will provide **five meritorious students** from Uttar Pradesh with the opportunity to **pursue master's degrees at leading UK universities** every year.
- **Objective:** The scholarship aims to **empower meritorious students** from Uttar Pradesh by enabling them to achieve excellence in education, research, and leadership at the international level.
  - It is designed to **transform the state's education system** and prepare students for global leadership roles.
- **Program Timeline:** The program will begin in the **2025-26 academic session** and run for **three years**, with the potential for renewal from the **2028-29 session**.
- **Financials:** The scholarship will **cover tuition, examination** and research fees, living allowances, and airfare to and from the UK.
- **Cost:** The estimated total cost per student is between **£38,048 to £42,076** (Rs 45–48 lakh).
  - **State Contribution:** Approximately **£19,800** (Rs 23 lakh).
  - **FCDO Contribution:** The remainder of the funding.
- **Student Selection: Five students** will receive full scholarships **each year** to study at prestigious UK universities, including the **University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge, the University of Edinburgh, and the London School of Economics and Political Science.**
- **Strategic Importance:** The scheme reflects the growing collaboration between India and the UK, particularly after Prime Minister **Narendra Modi's** recent visit to the UK, where he signed the **Trade Agreement** and **Vision 35**, opening new avenues for business and education.

World Humanitarian Day

Why in News?

On August 19th, **World Humanitarian Day** is observed to recognize the dedicated efforts of those who risk their lives to assist others in times of crisis. It also serves as a day to show support for the millions of people whose lives are endangered due to **conflict and disasters.**

Key Points

- **About:** World Humanitarian Day, led by the **United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)**, advocates for the well-being, dignity, and survival of people affected by crises, as well as the safety of humanitarian workers.
- **History:** On 19th August 2003, a bomb attack on the **Canal Hotel in Baghdad** killed **22 humanitarian aid workers**, including **Sergio Vieira de Mello**, the UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Iraq.
  - In his honor, the **United Nations General Assembly** adopted a resolution to designate this day as **World Humanitarian Day (WHD)**.
- **Theme:** This year's theme calls for ending attacks on humanitarians and civilians and ending impunity under International Humanitarian Law, urging those in power to **#ActForHumanity.**
  - The **#ActForHumanity** campaign with a call for:

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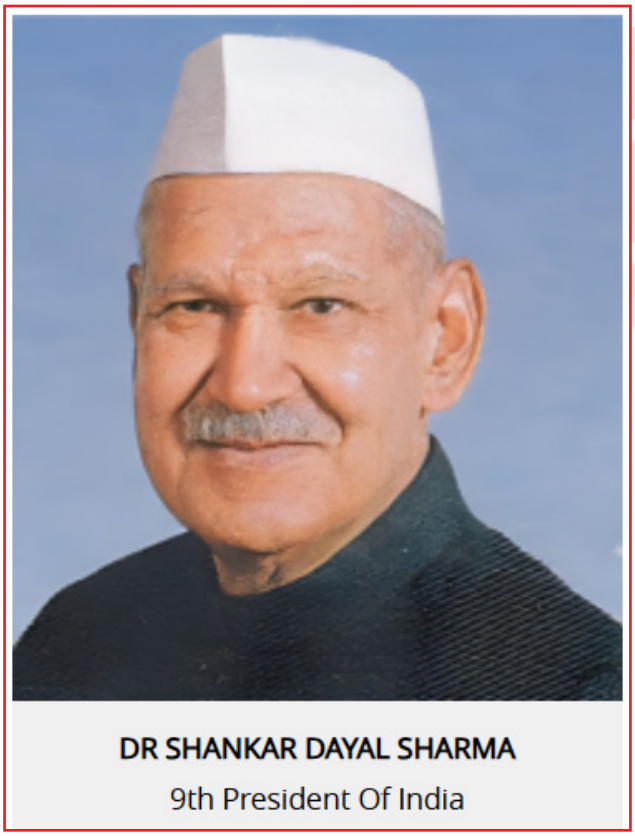
- **Protection** of humanitarian workers and the civilians they serve
- **Upholding international humanitarian law**
- **Funding** the vital lifelines that humanitarian aid provides

104th Birth Anniversary Of Dr Shanker Dayal Sharma

Why in News?

On the occasion of **Dr. Shanker Dayal Sharma's 104th birth anniversary**, the **ninth President of India (served from 25th July 1992 to 25th July 1997**), President Droupadi Murmu paid floral tributes at Rashtrapati Bhavan.



DR SHANKAR DAYAL SHARMA
9th President Of India

Key Facts About Dr Shanker Dayal Sharma

- **About:** Dr Shanker Dayal Sharma, born on **19th August 1918 (Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh)**, was an esteemed lawyer, politician, and the **President of India**.
  - He played a crucial role in India's independence struggle and made significant contributions in various political capacities.
- **Education:** Dr Sharma pursued his higher education at **Agra** and **Lucknow Universities**.
  - After obtaining a doctorate in law from **Cambridge University**, he attended **Lincoln's Inn** in London and **Harvard University**.
  - He began his legal practice in **1940** in **Lucknow**.
- **Literary Work:** He was also a noted poet and writer. He authored several books and edited prestigious publications such as the **Lucknow Law Journal (1941-43) and Socialist India (1971-74).**
- **Political Journey:** He became a **member of the erstwhile Bhopal Legislative Assembly from 1952 to 1956** and went on to serve as the **youngest Chief Minister of the state.**
  - He was **re-elected to the Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly from 1956 to 1971** and also served as the **Governor of Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, and Maharashtra.**
  - In **1971, he was elected to the Lok Sabha** and served as the **Minister of Communications from 1974 to 1977**.
- **Vice-Presidency and Presidency:** In **1984, Dr. Sharma was elected as the eighth Vice President of India,** serving in that role for **two terms** until **he was elected as the President of India in 1992.**
  - In **October 2000**, **President Shri K.R. Narayanan** released a special commemorative **postage stamp in honor of Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma.**
- **Death:** Dr Shanker Dayal Sharma passed away on 26th **December 1999**, following a massive heart attack.

Some Facts About the Office of the President of India

- **Two Terms**: The only President of India to have served two terms is **Dr. Rajendra Prasad**.
- **Presidential Deaths**: So far, **two Presidents, Dr. Zakir Hussain** and **Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed**, have passed away during their term in office.

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- **Acting President**: When **Dr. Zakir Hussain** passed away in May 1969, the then **Vice-President, V.V. Giri** became the acting President.
  - Following this, V.V. Giri resigned to contest the presidential election.
- **CJI as Acting President**: After V.V. Giri's resignation, **Chief Justice M. Hidayatullah** served as the officiating President from **20th July 1969** to 24th **August 1969**.

Note: Justice Hidayatullah is the **only person in Indian history** to have served in all three highest constitutional offices: **Chief Justice of India**, **Acting President** and **Vice President**.

Presidents of India (1950-2025)

S.No.	Name	Term Start	Term End	Duration	Key Details
1	Dr. Rajendra Prasad	26th January 1950	13th May 1962	12 years, 107 days	**First President of India; Only President to serve two terms**
2	Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan	13th May 1962	13th May 1967	5 years	Philosopher-President; **Teacher's Day celebrated on his birthday**
3	Dr. Zakir Husain	13th May 1967	3rd May 1969	1 year, 355 days	**First Muslim President; Died in office**
Acting	V.V. Giri	3rd May 1969	20th July 1969	78 days	Acting President after Zakir Husain's death
Acting	Justice Mohammad Hidayatullah	20th July 1969	24th August 1969	35 days	**CJI acted as President; V.V. Giri resigned to contest election**
4	V.V. Giri	24th August 1969	24th August 1974	5 years	Won as independent candidate against official Congress nominee
5	Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed	24th August 1974	11th February 1977	2 years, 171 days	**Died in office during Emergency period**
Acting	B.D. Jatti	11th February 1977	25th July 1977	164 days	Acting President; Former Chief Minister of Karnataka
6	Neelam Sanjiva Reddy	25th July 1977	25th July 1982	5 years	**First President elected unopposed**
7	Giani Zail Singh	25th July 1982	25th July 1987	5 years	**First Sikh President**
8	R. Venkataraman	25th July 1987	25th July 1992	5 years	**Former Vice President and Defence Minister**
9	Dr. Shankar Dayal Sharma	25th July 1992	25th July 1997	5 years	**Former Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh**
10	K.R. Narayanan	25th July 1997	25th July 2002	5 years	**First Dalit President; Career diplomat**
11	Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam	25th July 2002	25th July 2007	5 years	"People's President"; Missile Man of India
12	Pratibha Patil	25th July 2007	25th July 2012	5 years	**First Woman President of India**
13	Pranab Mukherjee	25th July 2012	25th July 2017	5 years	Veteran politician; Former Finance Minister
14	Ram Nath Kovind	25th July 2017	25th July 2022	5 years	Second Dalit President; Former Governor of Bihar
15	Droupadi Murmu	25th July 2022	Current	3+ years	Current President (2025); **First tribal woman President**

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10th Anniversary Of National Anubhav Awards

Why in News?

Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister of State for the Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, awarded the 8th "National Anubhav Awards" during the ceremony at Vigyan Bhawan, alongside the **57th Pre-Retirement Counselling Workshop.**

Key Points

- **Awards 2025:** The **10th anniversary** of the Anubhav Awards in 2025 highlighted significant milestones in governance and diversity.
  - **One-third of this year's awardees were women,** reflecting the increasing presence of women officials in governance.
  - A total of **15 awardees from 11 ministries and departments** were honored, including officers from a public sector bank and a **central public sector enterprise for the first time.**
- **Notable Awardees:**
  - **M. Venkatesan**: Recognized for his service during critical times, including the 2014 Kashmir floods and Ukraine evacuation of 2022.
  - **Hukum Singh Meena**: Led the digitization of land records in over 6.4 lakh villages.
  - **Shalini Kacker (SBI)**: Instrumental in Direct Benefit Transfer, pension reforms, and Digital Life Certificate campaigns.
  - **O. Virupakshappa (Department of Posts)**: Expanded postal savings and insurance schemes in rural areas.
  - **Saju P.K. (CRPF)**: Served in sensitive operational areas like Assam and Pulwama.
- **Pre-Retirement Counselling:** The event included pre-retirement counselling to inform soon-to-retire employees about pension procedures, health benefits, investment options, and income tax matters.
- **New Initiatives Launched:** The event saw the release of several initiatives, including:
  - Guidelines for the **Digital Life Certificate Campaign 4.0.**
  - A **Coffee Table e-Book** highlighting success stories from Special Campaign 2.0.
  - Plans have also been announced to use artificial intelligence to analyze memoirs submitted on the Anubhav portal.

National Anubhav Awards

- **About:** The Anubhav Awards, initiated by the **Department of Pension and Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW)**, is designed to recognize and document the experiences of retiring and retired Central Government employees.
  - **Launched in March 2015** on the direction of the Prime Minister of India, the objective is to create a culture of sharing experiences, fostering good governance and administrative reforms through the Anubhav Portal.
- **Eligibility:** Retiring Central Government employees/pensioners are eligible. Write-ups published on the **Anubhav Portal,** during the time frame notified by DoPPW, are considered for the awards.

UP Leads in PM-Surya Ghar Yojana

Why in News?

In July 2025, Uttar Pradesh (UP) became the **leading state** in the country for daily solar installations under the PM-Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana.

Key Points

- **About:** In July, UP surpassed Gujarat (830/day) and Maharashtra (781/day) by installing **891 solar units per day,** compared to being behind them in April 2025.
  - The state has set a new daily solar installation target of 1,300 to further scale up efforts.
- **Key Strategies:** UP is prioritizing solar installations in its development strategy, with a revised focus on training and empowering **Surya Mitras** (solar

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workers), emphasizing **entrepreneurship** and customer satisfaction.

- As part of this effort, the **five best-performing Surya Mitras** were felicitated during an in-house program marking **Akshay Urja Diwas.**

- **Impact:** The state's efforts have led to the expansion of the **renewable energy vendor network**, which has grown from 86 vendors at the launch of the **PM Surya Ghar Scheme** to over 3,000 vendors currently.
  - This growth is driving employment in the solar sector and supporting UP's goal of becoming a **one trillion-dollar economy by 2029.**
- **Long-Term Goals:** UP plans to achieve **22 gigawatts of installed solar capacity** by 2027, supported by a favorable policy framework and public-private partnerships to accelerate progress.

Category	Details
State Solar Potential	23 GW
Installed Solar Power Capacity	2,632 MW
Solar Capacity to be Added under PM KUSUM Scheme	2,000 MW
Total Electricity Generation Capacity (by FY 2028)	40,191 MW (30,003 MW operational)
Uttar Pradesh Solar Energy Policy 2022	14 GW of Utility Scale Solar Energy power projects planned by FY 2028
Green Power Tariff	Rs. 0.54 per kWh (50% of additional cost)
Net Billing / Net Feed-In	Introduced under UPERC for Rooftop Solar PV Grid-Interactive System (Gross/ Net Metering)

Key Facts About PM-Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana

- **About:** The PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, launched in **February 2024** by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), aims to provide free electricity to **one crore households** by installing rooftop solar panels.
  - With a total budget of Rs 75,021 crore, the scheme is planned for implementation until FY 2026-27.
  - It offers up to **300 units of free electricity per month** and provides a subsidy covering up to **40% of the installation cost,** promoting widespread solar energy adoption across the country.
- **Eligibility:** Indian citizens, homeowners, valid electricity connection, and no prior solar subsidy.
- **Implementation:** It will be implemented by the **National Programme Implementation Agency (NPIA)** at the national level and State Implementation Agencies (SIA) at the state level.
- **Key Components:**
  - **Central Financial Assistance (CFA):** Provides financial support to residential consumers for installing rooftop solar panels through the National Portal.
  - **Model Solar Village:** Create one Model Solar Village per district, promoting solar energy adoption.

Shree Kashi Vishwanath Dham Is Plastic-Free Zone

Why in News?

The **Shree Kashi Vishwanath Dham** in **Varanasi** was officially declared a **plastic-free zone** from **11th August 2025**.

Key Points

- **About:** A series of **measures were introduced to eliminate plastic** use within the temple premises, making it a model of sustainability and eco-friendliness.
- **Initiative and Ban:** Following a complete ban on single-use plastics ahead of the **Shravan month**, the authorities at **Kashi Vishwanath Dham** have also imposed a blanket ban on **plastic utensils** used

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for carrying **water**, **milk** for offerings, and **plastic baskets** used for carrying flowers and other worship materials.

- **Eco-Friendly Alternatives:** To support this initiative, **vendors** were provided with **eco-friendly baskets** made of **bamboo strips** and **stainless steel** along with other **metal utensils**.

Shree Kashi Vishwanath Temple

- **Location:** Varanasi, on the western bank of the Ganga River, India's holiest river.
- **Significance:**
  - **Oldest surviving city** and **cultural capital of India**.
  - It enshrines the Jyotirlinga of Shiva, **Vishweshwara (Vishwanath)**, which is **one of the twelve Jyotirlingas.**
  - The temple has been a spiritual center for many great saints such as **Adi Shankaracharya**, **Ramkrishna Paramhansa**, Swami Vivekananda, **Goswami Tulsidas**, **Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati**, **Gurunanak**, etc.
- **Temple Construction:**
  - Built in **1780** by **Maharani Ahilya Bai Holkar** of **Indore**.
  - **Naubatkhana (Naqqar Khana)** was added in **1785** by **Collector Mohd. Ibrahim Khan** (at the behest of Governor General Warren Hastings).
  - In **1839**, **Maharaja Ranjit Singh** donated gold to cover two domes; the third dome remains uncovered.

Renaming Of Jalalabad to Parashurampuri

Why in News?

The Union Home Ministry has officially approved the **renaming of Jalalabad town** in Uttar Pradesh's Shahjahanpur district to **Parashurampuri.**

Key Points

- **About**: The **Union government** has directed the Uttar Pradesh government to notify the new name, **Parashurampuri,** and register it in both Devnagri (Hindi) and **Roman (English) scripts,** along with **all regional languages.**
  - The Uttar Pradesh government, in its request to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), had emphasized that Jalalabad is recognized as the **birthplace of Parashuram,** the saint, and is home to an **ancient temple** dedicated to him.
- **History:** Jalalabad was established **around 1560** and was named after **Mughal emperor** Jalal-ud-din Muhammad Akbar **(Son of Humayun),** popularly known as **Akbar the Great.**
  - The state government began developing Jalalabad as a **tourist destination in 2016.**
- **Process of Renaming District:** The Centre has no role in altering or creating districts, as states have the authority to make such decisions, but the **Home Ministry is involved** when a **state seeks to change the name of a district or railway station.**
  - The State government's request is sent to other departments and agencies such as the **Ministry of Earth Sciences**, Intelligence Bureau, Department of Posts, Geographical Survey of India Sciences and the Railway Ministry seeking clearance.
  - A no-objection certificate may be issued after examining their replies.

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Places Previously Renamed in UP			
Old Name	**New Name**	**Old Name**	**New Name**
Allahabad	Prayagaraj	Faizabad	Ayodhya
Mughalsarai Railway Station	Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyay Nagar	Jhansi Railway Station	Veerangana Laxmi Bai
Banaras	Varanasi		

Uttar Pradesh Footwear, Leather, and Non-Leather Area Development Policy 2025

Why in News?

In a move to enhance UP's status in the global footwear, leather sector, the Uttar Pradesh (UP) government has approved the **Uttar Pradesh Footwear, Leather, and Non-Leather Area Development Policy 2025.**

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Key Features of Policy

- **Export Boost**: The policy seeks to boost Uttar Pradesh's share in leather and non-leather exports by **attracting international investments,** with dedicated investment drives conducted in countries like **China and Japan.**
- **Modernization**: Emphasis on **upgrading technology,** modernizing production facilities, and launching **training programs** to improve product quality and generate employment.
  - Establishment of **Centres of Excellence (CoEs)** in the leather and footwear sector.
  - Grants to support IPR (Intellectual Property Rights) development, covering up to **Rs. 1 crore** per unit.
- **Skill Development**: Training centers will focus on **upskilling youth**, with specialized courses designed in partnership with educational institutions.
  - Targeted to create approximately **22 lakh jobs** in the sector over the **next five years,** with a significant focus on **employing women and people with disabilities.**
- **Dedicated Leather Parks**: The government will create **large plots of land** and establish **dedicated leather parks** with plug-and-play facilities, waste treatment plants, and state-of-the-art infrastructure.
  - **Kanpur, Agra, and Unnao** will see the establishment of **mega-leather parks** to cater to growing demand.
  - Special incentives for setting up operations in underserved areas like **Bundelkhand and Purvanchal.**
- **Financial Incentive:** The policy includes provisions to support both new and existing businesses by **providing incentives and subsidies** for setting up new leather parks and clusters.
  - **25% Capital Subsidy** for setting up leather parks or clusters on 50+ acres.
  - **100% Exemption on Stamp Duty** for land purchase related to the project.
  - Reimbursement of **50% transportation costs** for exporting products to markets outside Nepal, Bangladesh, and Bhutan for the **first three years.**
- **Sustainability Focus: 50% Reimbursement** for adopting carbon credit certification, renewable energy certifications, and energy audits.
  - **75% Subsidy** for obtaining international sustainability certifications.
  - Support for adopting **biodegradable tanning agents** and waterless dyeing technologies.

Industry Insights

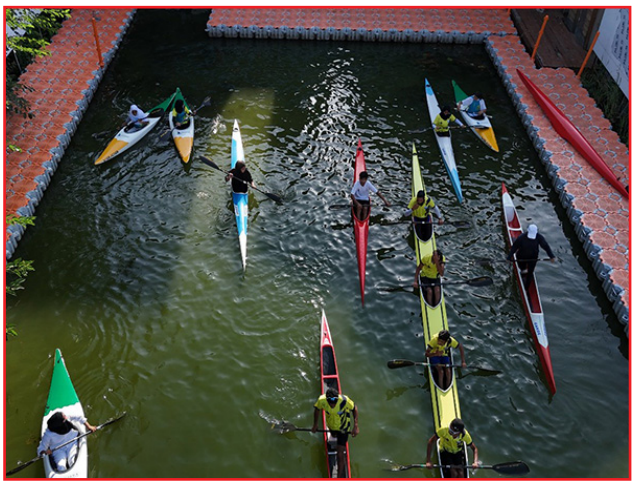
- **Market Positioning**: UP is one of India's leading hubs for leather and footwear, contributing nearly **46% of India's total leather exports.**
- **Key Locations**: **Agra** is renowned as the **'Footwear Capital of India,'** while Kanpur is a major player in leather accessories and saddlery.
- **Estimated Market Size**: The market size of **UP's leather industry** is valued at approximately **$3.5 billio**n, with the footwear segment being a significant contributor.

First Khelo India Water Sports Festival 2025

Why in News?

The **inaugural Khelo India Water Sports Festival (KIWSF) 2025** will be held at **Dal Lake** from **21st August 2025 to 23rd August 2025**, with over 400 participants competing in **rowing, canoeing, and kayaking.**

- This will be the **2nd Khelo India event** in Jammu & Kashmir, following the Khelo India Winter Games in **Gulmarg**, further establishing the region as India's winter sports hub.



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Key Points

- **About: KIWSF 2025** is being organised jointly by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) and the **Jammu & Kashmir Sports Council** under the government's Khelo Bharat initiative.
- **Objective:** It aims to **expand grassroots sports**, generate local employment, and upgrade infrastructure.
- **Events:** It will be the **first consolidated Open-age category championships** where all 14 kayaking and canoeing events and the 10 rowing events are Olympic events.
  - There will also be three demonstration events – water skiing, shikhara boat spring, and dragon boat race.
- **Qualifications:** The November 2024 kayaking and canoeing nationals in Tehri (Uttarakhand) served as a qualifier, with the top 15 in singles and doubles, and the top eight in fours, advancing to KIWSF.
  - For rowing, the top eight from the nationals held in Bhopal in March 2025 will take part.
- **Participants:** The KIWSF will include **athletes from 36 states and Union Territories**, with the absence of a Services team.
  - The Games will feature **almost equal representation**, with 409 athletes competing for medals, including 202 women.
  - **Madhya Pradesh (44),** Haryana (37), Odisha (34), and Kerala (33) will have the largest contingent at KIWSF 2025.
  - **Gujarat**, Puducherry, and West Bengal will have the smallest teams.

Khelo India

- **Launched by the Indian government in 2017,** Khelo India aims to revitalize the **nation's sporting culture** by engaging children at the grassroots level and enhancing infrastructure and academies for various sports.
  - The initiative began with the **Khelo India School Games in 2018** in New Delhi, and after the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) joined in 2018, the games were renamed to Khelo India Youth Games, with the **first edition held in Pune** in 2019.
- The Khelo India movement introduced the **Khelo India Youth Games (KIYG),** Khelo India University Games (KIUG), and Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) as annual national sports events where youth from various states and universities showcase their skills and compete for medals.
  - A new addition to the Khelo India calendar, the Khelo India Water Sports Festival and the **Khelo India Beach Games**, which took place in **Diu** in May 2025, highlight the expansion of events under this initiative.
- The Khelo India Youth Games, which started in 2018 with 18 sports, expanded to 27 sports in 2025 when held in Bihar, with competitions organized in the **Under-17** and **Under-21** categories for both boys and girls.
- The Khelo India Centres initiative, part of the Khelo India State Centres of Excellence (KISCE) scheme, focuses on strengthening sports infrastructure at the grassroots level in India.

India's Performance At IOAA 2025

Why in News?

India's national team emerged victorious at the **18th** International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics (IOAA) 2025, held in **Mumbai** from **15th to 21st August**, winning **four gold medals** and **one silver medal**.

- The event, which saw participation from **288 students** across **63 countries**, marked another milestone for India's reputation in global science education.

Key Points

- **Gold Medalists from India** are:
  - **Aarush Mishra** from **Bengaluru**
  - **Banibrata Majee** from **Delhi**
  - **Panini** from **Patna**
  - **Akshat Srivastava** from **Kolkata**
- **Silver Medalists from India** are:
  - **Sumant Gupta** from **Gurugram** secured the **silver medal**, completing India's impressive medal haul.

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- **Competition Highlights:** This year's IOAA gathered **288 students** from around the globe, who participated in a series of practical and theoretical evaluations.
  - **Iran** stood out as the top performer, with **all five of its team members securing gold medals.**
- **Closing Ceremony and Awards:** The IOAA concluded on **21st August 2025**, with a grand closing ceremony.
  - **145 medals** were awarded, including **50 golds**, **44 silvers**, and **51 bronzes**. **Anil Kakodkar**, Chancellor of **Homi Bhabha National Institute**, congratulated the winners, praising their pursuit of scientific excellence and India's increasing investments in **astronomy** and **space research**.
- **Global Participation:** Countries like **Australia** and **Hong Kong** celebrated their **first-time successes**, with **Australia** securing a silver medal and **Hong Kong** also achieving a silver.
  - **Italy** won three bronze medals, reflecting the growing global interest in space science education.
- **About IOAA:** The **IOAA**, established in **2007**, is a premier global event for high-school students passionate about astronomy and astrophysics. This year, the event was organized by the **Homi Bhabha Centre for Science Education (HBCSE)**, a part of the **Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR)**.

Inauguration Of the Kunj

Why in News?

Union Minister of Textiles Shri Giriraj Singh inaugurated **"The Kunj", a flagship retail** and cultural destination dedicated to celebrating and promoting the **diverse heritage** of Indian handicrafts and handlooms, located in New Delhi.

Key Points

- **About:** The **Kunj is a pioneering initiative focused on empowering artisans**, improving **market access**, and reimagining the **craft sector** with a design-driven, experiential approach.
  - Conceived and developed by the **Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts),** this initiative aims to transform the craft sector through its unique design-led perspective.
- It is **India's first initiative** of its kind, designed to promote crafts on a large scale, aligning with the central government's vision of taking artisans **"from gaon to global."**
- The Kunj marks the start of a **three-month inaugural celebration,** offering a curated mix of retail showrooms, live craft demonstrations, artisan-led workshops, culinary experiences, and immersive exhibitions.
- The success of this initiative is anticipated to serve as a **model for similar projects** across India, strengthening the country's role as a global hub for **traditional craftsmanship** and handmade excellence.

UP Police's Savera Yojana

Why in News?

In observance of World Senior Citizens' Day on 21st August 2025, the UP Police's emergency wing, **UP-112,** launched a special initiative to reconnect with elderly residents enrolled in the **Savera Yojana.**

- The initiative focused on ensuring the **safety, well-being, and dignity of senior citizens** by conducting wellness checks and providing on-the-ground support.
- Police teams across districts contacted thousands of enrolled senior citizens to **inquire about their health, safety concerns,** and any challenges they were experiencing.

Savera Yojana

- **Launched:** The initiative was **launched** by Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Yogi Adityanath on **26th October 2019.**
- **Objective:** It aims to establish a **regular community-connect with the citizens** and resolve their personal and collective problems at the initial stage itself, in order to create a sense of security and safety among the citizens.
- **Registration:** Senior citizens can call **UP-112 to register,** and upon registration, they will receive security assistance from the nearest Police Station or Police Response Vehicle if needed.

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- **Special Cell:** A **special Senior Citizen Cell** has been constituted at the **district level** and in every police station to help resolve issues concerning senior citizens.

World Senior Citizen Day

- **World Senior Citizen Day** is celebrated every year on **21st August** to acknowledge the contributions of **senior citizens**, raise awareness about the challenges they face globally, and highlight the growing importance of the **silver economy**.
  - Silver Economy refers to all economic activities, goods, and services catering to senior citizens.
- World Senior Citizen Day began in 1988 when US President Reagan designated 21st August to honor seniors and promote supportive policies.
- It is different from the **International Day of Older Persons.** The **United Nations General Assembly** designated **1st Octobe**r as the International Day of Older Persons, which was first observed in 1991.

National Space Day Celebration

Why in News?

On **National Space Day**, observed on 23rd August, all schools in Lucknow celebrated India's advancements in space science.

- A new educational module, **India - A Rising Space Power**, developed by **NCERT**, was also launched as part of the celebration.
- The event aims to inspire students toward careers in **science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)**, with special assemblies, exhibitions, workshops, and online/offline sessions with experts.
- Resources like **Diksha, Nishtha** and the **India on the Moon portal** will also be used to keep students informed about space exploration.

National Space Day

- **About:** The National Space Day commemorates the successful soft landing of the **Chandrayaan-3 Mission's Vikram Lander** and the deployment of the **Pragyan Rover** on the Moon on **23rd August 2023.**
  - With the launch of Chandrayaan-3, **India became the fourth nation** to **successfully land on the Moon and the first to reach its southern polar region.**
  - India celebrated its **first National Space Day** on 23rd August 2024.
- **Theme 2025: Aryabhatta to Gaganyaan: Ancient Wisdom to Infinite Possibilities**
- Events:
  - The **National Meet 2025**, themed **"Leveraging Space Technology for Viksit Bharat 2047,"** gathered leaders to explore space tech's role in advancing national priorities across various sectors.
  - **Physical Research Laboratory (PRL)** organised a workshop with the theme "Aryabhatta to Gaganyaan: Ancient Wisdom to Infinite Possibilities."
- **Significance:** It highlights India's space exploration capabilities and aims to inspire future generations to pursue careers in **science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM)**, contributing to India's ongoing space endeavours.

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GB Nagar and Shravasti Tops in Complaint Redressal

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh** government released its **grievance redressal report** through the **Integrated Grievance Redressal System**, highlighting districts with the highest citizen satisfaction.

Key Points

- **Police Complaint Redressal: Gautam Budh Nagar** topped with a **98.72% satisfied feedback rate**, followed by Pilibhit (98.23%), Ballia (96.04%), Basti (95.43%), and Shravasti (95.14%).
- **District Magistrate Complaint Redressal: Shravasti** led with **90.2% satisfaction**, followed by Shahjahanpur (89.08%), Balrampur (83.44%), Hamirpur (82.15%), and Bareilly (80.11%).
- **Mechanism for Transparency:** Complaints cannot be closed by officers against whom they are filed; senior officials such as ADM, ASP, DCP, or DCP-level officers review resolutions and personally interact with complainants.

PM to Inaugurate SEMICON India 2025

Why in News?

PM Narendra Modi is set to **inaugurate the 4th edition of SEMICON India 2025** on **2nd September 2025 at Yashobhoomi, New Delhi.**

- The event will be **India's largest semiconductor and electronics exhibition,** bringing together global leaders, industry experts, policymakers, and students to showcase advancements in the semiconductor ecosystem and reinforce India's vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Key Points

- **SEMICON India:** SEMICON India is one of eight annual SEMICON expositions globally hosted by **SEMI**, connecting executives, experts, and innovators in the semiconductor and electronics ecosystem.
  - **SEMI:** SEMI is a global industry association with over **3,000 member companies** and 1.5 million professionals worldwide, working to accelerate collaboration in semiconductor and electronics manufacturing.
- **Theme:** ***Building the Next Semiconductor Powerhouse*.**
- **Participation:** 33 countries, 50+ global CXOs, 350 exhibitors, 50+ visionary speakers, 6 international country roundtables, and 9 state pavilions.
- **Focus Areas:** Fabs, advanced packaging, smart manufacturing, AI, supply chain management, sustainability, workforce development, design innovations, and start-ups.

- **India Semiconductor Mission (ISM):** ISM, under **MeitY**, is the nodal agency for the Semicon India Programme, facilitating sustainable and globally competitive semiconductor manufacturing in India.
  - ISM evaluates proposals, coordinates with governments, manages fiscal incentives, and ensures India becomes a trusted global hub for semiconductor and electronics manufacturing.

Shubhanshu Shukla Honoured in Lucknow

Why in News?

Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla, the **first Indian to travel to the International Space Station (ISS)**, received an overwhelming welcome upon his return to Lucknow, his hometown.

- The **Uttar Pradesh government** organized a special felicitation ceremony at **Lok Bhawan**, where **Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath** honored Shubhanshu Shukla and his family.

Key Points

- **Scholarship:** The CM announced the **establishment of a scholarship in Shubhanshu's name** for students pursuing **space technology**, highlighting that it had been four decades since an Indian had the opportunity to travel to space.

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- The **state's active participation** in space technology was also underscored, with **more than a dozen institutions** in Uttar Pradesh now offering related courses.

- **Postal Stamp: India Post also** launched a **postal cover and stamp** in honor of Shubhanshu's space mission.
- **Mobile Innovation Programme: City Montessori School (CMS)**, Lucknow, in collaboration with Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Technical University (**AKTU**), launched the **"Shubhanshu Shukla Innovations Express"**, a mobile innovation programme to celebrate his feat.
- **Role in Disaster Management**: The CM also emphasized the crucial role of space technology in improving the management of natural disasters.

Shubhanshu Shukla

- Indian Air Force Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla is the first Indian astronaut to travel to the International Space Station (ISS) on a private mission in 2025.
  - It was led by NASA astronaut Peggy Whitson, and Shubhanshu Shukla served as the mission pilot.
- He is also the astronaut-designate for India's human spaceflight program, **Gaganyaan**.
- He boarded the **SpaceX** Dragon spacecraft from Kennedy Space Center in Florida as part of the **Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4)**, a joint venture between **NASA** and **ISRO**.
- The Axiom Mission 4 (Ax-4) involves astronauts from India, Poland, and Hungary and is the first such collaboration in over 40 years.
- The astronauts spent 14 days aboard the ISS conducting scientific experiments, educational outreach, and commercial activities with NASA and ISRO.
- Rakesh Sharma was the first Indian to travel to space in 1984 aboard the **Soviet** Soyuz T-11 mission under the Interkosmos program.

Lok Samvardhan Parv

Why in News?

The **Ministry of Minority Affairs**, Government of India, is organizing the 5th edition of Lok Samvardhan Parv from 26th August to 4th September, 2025, in Kochi, Kerala.

- The event, marking the **first-ever Lok Samvardhan Parv in Kerala**, will showcase over 100 artisans and 15 culinary experts from across the country.

Key Points

- **About:** Lok Samvardhan Parv is a **flagship initiative** by the Ministry of Minority Affairs, designed to empower artisans, craftspersons, weavers, culinary experts, and entrepreneurs from **minority communities** by providing them with market linkages and national exposure.
- **Objective:** The festival aims to **celebrate India's vibrant diversity** and provide a platform for these communities to showcase their art, craft, and culinary talent.
  - This initiative is aligned with the government's vision of promoting **inclusive development** and self-reliance among **minority communities.**
- **Crafts**: The festival will showcase a wide variety of traditional crafts, including:

Craft/Art	Region
Zari and Chikankari	Uttar Pradesh
Phulkari embroidery	Punjab
Madhubani paintings	Bihar
Blue Pottery	Rajasthan
Pashmina weaving	Ladakh
Bastar Iron Craft	Chhattisgarh
Channapatna wooden toys	Karnataka
Nettippattam making	Kerala

India's Minority Communities

- **Minority Communities:** The **Central Government determines minority status** under the National Commission for Minorities Act (NCMA), 1992, officially recognizing Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Jains (added in 2014), and Zoroastrians (Parsis) as minority communities.
  - Together, they constitute around 19.3% of India's total population **(Census 2011).**
  - While most states follow the central list, some, like Maharashtra, may have their own (e.g., Jews are a notified minority in Maharashtra).

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- **Constitutional Provisions:**
  - Article 29 protects minorities' rights to **preserve their distinct language,** script, and culture, and prohibits discrimination based on religion, race, caste, or language.
  - Article 30 grants minorities the right to establish and manage educational institutions.
- **Institutions to Protect Minority Rights:**
  - **Ministry of Minority Affairs:** Established in 2006, carved out from the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, coordinates programs for the socio-economic development of minority communities in India.
  - **National Commission for Minorities (NCM):** Created under the NCMA 1992, the NCM safeguards the interests of minority groups in line with the Constitution and laws enacted by the Parliament.

National Teachers Awards 2025

Why in News?

Madhurima Tiwari (Mirzapur) and **Ram Lal Singh Yadav (Bhadohi)** from Uttar Pradesh have been selected for the National Teachers Awards, to be conferred on Teachers' Day (5 September 2025).

- Teachers' Day marks the birth anniversary of Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan **(1888-1975).**

National Teachers Awards

- **About:** The awards, established in 1958, are presented annually on Teachers' Day (September 5) by the President **or** Vice President **of India,** under the supervision of the **Ministry of Education (MOE).**
  - The National Teachers Awards (NTA) are given annually to exceptional teachers from across the country in recognition of their contributions towards improving the **quality of education and student development.**
  - It carries a certificate of merit, a cash award of Rs. 50,000, and a silver medal.
- **NTA 2025: Forty-five teachers** from across India will be recognized in 2025 for their **dedication, innovation,** and contributions to improving student enrollment, reducing dropout rates, and introducing creative teaching methods.
- **Significance:** The NTA recognizes **primary, middle, and secondary school teachers** for their outstanding efforts to improve education, inspire students, and make a tangible difference in their communities.

Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan

- **Birth:** He was born into a Telugu family in Tiruttani town of Tamil Nadu, on 5th September 1888.
- **Academic Achievements:** He held several prestigious positions, including the King George V Chair at Calcutta University from 1921 to 1932, the second Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University from 1931 to 1936, and the fourth Vice-Chancellor of Banaras Hindu University from 1939 to 1948.
  - Moreover, he was Professor of Eastern Religion and Ethics at the University of Oxford from 1936 to 1952.
- **Political Career:** He became the first **Vice President of India (1952-62)** and later the second President of India (1962-67).
- **Philosopher:** He is widely acknowledged in philosophical circles as a **"bridge-builder"** between India and the West.
- **Recognition:** In 1954, he was awarded the country's highest civilian award, Bharat Ratna.
  - In 1931, he was awarded with **knighthood** by King George V, former King of Britain, for his remarkable academics.

India to Lead Executive Board Of AIBD

Why in News?

India has been elected as the **Chairman** of the **Executive Board of** Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) during the 23rd AIBD General Conference, held from 19th to 21st August 2025 in **Phuket, Thailand.**

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- This marks a significant milestone, as India last held the position of AIBD Executive Council Chairman in 2016.

AIBD General Conference (GC 2025)

- **About:** The 23rd GC 2025 and Associated Meetings of AIBD brought together global stakeholders in electronic media, with a **focus on promoting a dynamic and cooperative media landscape** across the Asia-Pacific region through policy discussions and resource sharing.
  - **India is also the chairman of AIBD GC**, with **Gaurav Dwivedi, CEO of Prasar Bharati**, serving as the **President** of the AIBD GC until August 2025.
- **Theme:** The theme for the current year was **"Media for People, Peace & Prosperity".**
- **Significance:** It highlights the **global confidence in India's leadership** in the field of broadcasting and sets the stage for India to play an even more **strategic and influential role** in shaping media development worldwide.

Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD)

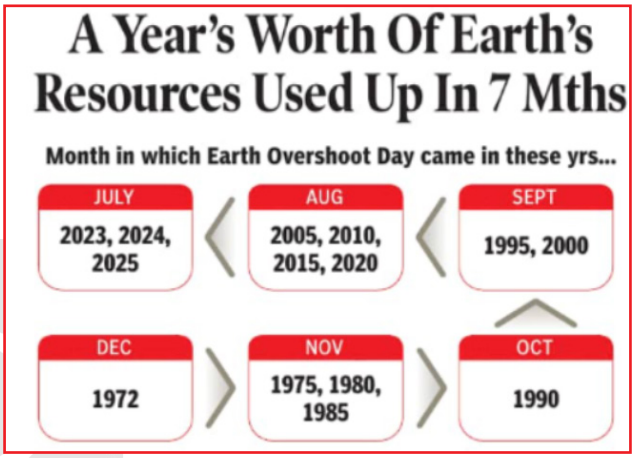
- **Foundation:** It was founded in 1977 under UNESCO's guidance, with India as a founding member.
  - The **International Telecommunication Union (ITU)**, the **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP),** and the **Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU)** are founding organizations of the Institute, and they are non-voting members of the General Conference.
  - **Prasar Bharati**, India's public service broadcaster represents the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting in the organization.
- **Membership:** It is a **unique regional inter-governmental organization** with over 92 member organizations from 45 countries.
- **Secretariat:** Its secretariat is situated in **Kuala Lumpur** and is hosted by the Government of Malaysia.

Earth Overshoot Day 2025

Why in News?

Earth Overshoot Day occurred on **24th July** this year(2025), marking the **earliest date ever** when humanity's demand for ecological resources surpasses what the Earth can regenerate in a year.

- This means humans have consumed an entire year's worth of resources in **under seven months.**



Key Points

- **Definition**: Earth Overshoot Day marks the date when humanity's demand for **ecological resources and services** exceeds the Earth's capacity to regenerate them in that year.
- **Inception**: The idea of Earth Overshoot Day was first proposed by **Andrew Simms** of the UK think tank New Economics Foundation.
  - The **New Economics Foundation** partnered with **Global Footprint Network** in 2006 to launch the campaign. Since 2007, the **World Wide Fund (WWF)** has collaborated on the initiative.
- **Calculation**: **Global Footprint Network** hosts and calculates the event based on the **National Footprint and Biocapacity Accounts**, maintained by **York University**.
  - The **data is updated annually** to reflect the most accurate and current global consumption patterns.

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- **Formula:**

$$\text{Earth Overshoot Day} = \left(\frac{\text{Earth's Biocapacity}}{\text{Humanity's Ecological Footprint}}\right) \times 365$$

- **Biocapacity vs. Ecological Footprint:**
  - **Biocapacity**: The amount of **ecological resources** Earth can regenerate in a given year (e.g., forests, grazing lands, croplands).
    - Represents the Earth's productive land and sea areas, including forests, grazing lands, cropland, and fishing grounds.
  - **Ecological Footprint**: The total demand humanity places on these resources (including food, timber, space for urban infrastructure, and carbon dioxide absorption).
    - Measures a **population's demand** for resources like food, fiber, timber, and space to absorb CO_2 emissions from **fossil fuels.**
- **Global Impact**:
  - **Ecological Deficit**: When a region's demand exceeds its ecological supply, it runs an ecological deficit. This deficit is addressed by **importing resources, over-exploiting local ecosystems** (like overfishing), and emitting CO_2 into the atmosphere.
  - **Global Overshoot**: At a global scale, **ecological deficit and overshoot** are synonymous, as there's no net import of resources to the planet.

Sadak Suraksha Mitra Initiative

Why in News?

The **Uttar Pradesh Transport Department** launched the **Sadak Suraksha Mitra (SSM)** programme, initiated by the **Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH),** to **engage youth** in road safety measures and reduce accidents and fatalities.

Key Points

- **About:** The initiative is launched in partnership with the **Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports** and seeks to train and deploy volunteers through the **MYBharat platform.**
- **Target:** The program targets youth aged 18 to 28 with no pending traffic challans, with the first phase set to **cover 100 districts nationwide.**
- Training Programs:
  - **General Volunteers**: A **one-week training program** will be provided, which includes basic first aid and road safety awareness.
  - **Civil Engineering Graduates**: A **15-day training program** focused on road safety audits, black spot identification, awareness initiatives, and field surveys.
- **Recognition:** Outstanding volunteers will be recognized for their contributions with certificates and **'Good Samaritan' awards.**
- **Implementation:** The initiative will be implemented in **28 districts across Uttar Pradesh,** including Kanpur Nagar, Bulandshahr, Prayagraj, and Agra, among others.
- **Program Oversight:** The **District Road Safety Committees (DRSC)** will ensure the implementation, including volunteer onboarding, training, and monthly performance reviews, following **MoRTH's 12-step roadmap.**
- **Outcome:** The expected outcomes include a **reduction in road crashes and injuries,** improved emergency responses, increased youth engagement in road safety, and strengthened **district-level road safety systems** through structured training, field studies, and data-driven reporting.

Ayurveda Day 2025

Why in News?

Ayurveda Day, first observed in **2016,** will now be celebrated on **23 September every year**, replacing the earlier practice of celebrating it on **Dhanvantari Jayanti (Dhanteras).**

Key Points

- **About:** With the **fixed date of 23 September,** Ayurveda Day is poised to gain a permanent position in the global calendar, contributing to worldwide **health**, **well-being**, and **ecological sustainability** through the rich tradition of Ayurveda.

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- Ayurveda spread globally through **trade and cultural exchanges**, influencing traditional medicine practices in **Tibet, China,** and beyond.
- Ayurveda Day has evolved into a **global movement,** highlighting Ayurveda's recognition as a **traditional medicine system in 24 countries,** with over 100 nations importing its products.

- **Ayurveda Day 2025:**
  - **The theme for 2025 is "Ayurveda for People & Planet,"** emphasizing **global wellness** and environmental sustainability through Ayurveda.
  - The 2025 celebrations will focus on addressing global challenges like **lifestyle disorders, climate-related diseases,** and **stress management,** with Ayurveda promoted as a viable solution.
  - The **Ministry of Ayush** will lead activities, including **Awareness campaigns, Youth engagement programs, Wellness consultations, and International collaborations.**
- **Milestones of Ayurveda Day 2024:** The **9th Ayurveda Day (2024)** marked significant achievements in India's healthcare sector:
  - Inauguration of **Phase II of the All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA)**.
  - Launch of **four Centres of Excellence in Ayurveda**.
  - Introduction of **"Desh Ka Prakriti Parikshan Abhiyan"**
- **Significance:** The **first all-India NSSO survey** reaffirmed Ayurveda as the **most used treatment system** in both rural and urban India.

Initiatives Taken For Development of Ayurveda

- National Ayush Mission
- New Portals on Ayush Sector
- ACCR Portal and Ayush Sanjivani App

IMS For Atal Residential Schools

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath launched the **Integrated Monitoring System (IMS)** for **Atal Residential Schools** at the **Rozgar Mahakumbh 2025** held at **Indira Gandhi Pratishthan**, Lucknow.

Key Points

- **About:** The Integrated Monitoring System (IMS) will oversee **18 Atal Residential Schools in Uttar Pradesh,** benefiting around 18,000 students who will receive **free food and lodging** upon selection, with the schools being **digitally monitored.**
  - **Atal Residential Schools** aims to provide **modern, quality education** to the children of workers, particularly those registered under the **Building and Other Construction Workers (BOC) Board**.
  - Named after former **Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee,** the schools serve students from classes 1 to 12, including **Bal Vatikas.**
- **Features:**
  - **Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) System**: The **Atal Command Centre** serves as the command hub, enabling **digital monitoring** of the schools.
  - **Real-Time Attendance Management**: Daily updates on the **attendance** of students and staff.
  - **Academic Monitoring**: Students' profiles, academic progress, exam results, and report cards will be tracked and accessible online.
  - **Staff Profiles**: Information about teachers and staff will be integrated, ensuring **accountability** and **discipline**.
  - **Financial Management**: Transparent records of budgets, expenses, and billing are maintained on the **ERP system.**

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- **CCTV Integration**: Live monitoring of **school campuses,** enhancing security and discipline.
- **Student Profiles**: Detailed evaluation of each student's personal details and **academic progress** will be monitored through the system.

Rozgar Mahakumbh 2025

- **About:** Rozgaar Mahakumbh 2025 is **Uttar Pradesh's largest integrated employment and placement initiative**, designed to bridge the gap between potential and opportunity.
- **Initiatives:**
  - **Shram Nyay Setu Portal:** The portal aims to provide **quick, transparent, and time-bound justice** for workers by enabling online settlement of labor disputes and offering 24/7 services.
  - **Industrial Tribunal Website & E-Court Portal:** These portals were launched to facilitate **efficient legal proceedings** and the resolution of **worker-related disputes**.
  - **Basic Education:** The IMS System will be introduced in basic education, with the first phase focusing on the establishment of **57 CM Abhyudaya and Composite Schools**.

UP to Host India's First World Boxing Cup

Why in News?

India will host the World Boxing Cup (men's and women's) for the **first time in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh,** from 13th- 24th November 2025, at the Vijay Pathik Sports Complex.

- The event will feature 450 boxers from over 80 countries, along with approximately 150 officials, and will coincide with the **World Boxing Congress** on 23rd November 2025.

Boxing World Cup

- **About:** It is an **annual series** where elite boxers **compete across multiple stages** throughout the year to accumulate ranking points.
  - The year culminates in a **Finals event,** bringing together top-ranked boxers for the final trophy.
- **Boxing World Cup (2023-2025):**
  - The first World Boxing Cup competition was held in Cologne, Germany, in October 2023.
  - The 2024 series took place across England, the USA, and Mongolia, culminating in a Finals event in England in November 2024.
  - For 2025, events will be held in Brazil, Germany, and Kazakhstan, with the **Finals in India in November 2025.**
- **World Boxing Cup 2025:** The event marks **India's first time hosting** the prestigious competition, with the **Boxing Federation of India (BFI)** being a major contender for the bid.
  - India has previously hosted the **Women's World Boxing Championship** twice (2018 and 2023 in Delhi).
  - The **World Boxing Congress** was also held in Greater Noida in 2017.
- **Other Major Boxing Events:**
  - **U19 World Boxing Championships (October 2024):** Held in Colorado Springs, USA, with over 180 male and female boxers aged 17 and 18.
  - **Elite World Boxing Championships (September 2025):** The first event will take place in Liverpool, England, from 4-14 September 2025.
  - **Elite World Boxing Championships (2027):** Astana, Kazakhstan, will host the 2027 event following a successful bidding process.

World Boxing

- **About: World Boxing,** since the latter part of 2023, has been committed to **organizing high-quality competitions** to help boxers develop and progress.
  - The organization collaborates with **National Federations** and key stakeholders to deliver competitive opportunities for both male and female boxers at various levels.

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Boxing Federation of India (BFI)

- **About:** It is the **national body** overseeing amateur boxing, promoting the sport domestically, and representing India in international events like the **Olympics and World Championships.**
- **Leadership**: **Pramod Kumar** has recently been elected as the Secretary-General of the **Boxing Federation of India (BFI)**, and **Ajay Singh** as its President.
  - **Pramod Kumar** had represented India in the **5000m sprint** at the **1986 Asian Games** in Seoul.
  - He won **two gold medals** at the **1985 South Asian Game**s in Dhaka, bringing recognition to Indian boxing.

Project Aarohan

Why in News?

National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), in collaboration with Vertis Infrastructure Trust, launched **'Project Aarohan'** to support the educational aspirations of **toll plaza employees'** children, with the launch ceremony held at NHAI Headquarters in **New Delhi.**

Key Points

- **About:** The program aims to **address financial barriers** and promote equal access to quality education for students from economically weaker sections (EWS), first-generation learners, and marginalized communities, including Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC), and minority groups.
- **Objective:** The program combines **financial assistance** with **structured mentorship**, **skill-building workshops**, and **career guidance** to enhance the overall educational experience of the students.
  - The initiative aims to equip students not only for higher education but also for future **employment** and **entrepreneurship**.
- **Funding:** The first phase of the project has been allocated a fund of **₹1 Crore** for the financial year **2025-26**.
  - The project will support **500 students from Class 11** to their final year of graduation, offering an **annual scholarship of 12,000 rupees** for the financial year 2025-26.
  - **Fifty bright students** aiming for postgraduate and higher studies will receive scholarships of 50,000 rupees each.

National Highway Authority of India (NHAI)

- The National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) was established by the **NHAI Act, 1988,** to oversee the development, maintenance, and management of national highways.
- NHAI's key responsibility is implementing the **National Highways Development Project (NHDP),** which covers 50,329 km of highways, and improving road infrastructure for smoother traffic flow.
- With a total length of **132,499 km**, national highways carry about **40% of the total road traffic in India,** despite making up **only 2% of the road network**.

115th Birth Anniversary Of St Mother Teresa

Why in News?

The **115th birth anniversary of** Saint Mother Teresa was celebrated on **26th August 2025**, at **Mother's House**, Kolkata.

Key Facts About Mother Teresa

- **Mother Teresa, born Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu** in 1910 in **Skopje, Ottoman Empire (now North Macedonia),** dedicated her life to serving the poorest of the poor.
  - Her journey began at the age of 12 when she felt called to serve as a missionary.
- **In 1928, at the age of 18, she** moved to India, where she took her vows in 1931. For 17 years, she taught at St. Mary's High School in Calcutta.
- Mother Teresa founded the **Missionaries of Charity on 7th October 1950,** after receiving approval from the Vatican.

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- Her order, which expanded globally, focuses on caring for the destitute, including refugees, the elderly, and those suffering from AIDS, among others.

- By the 1990s, the **Missionaries of Charity had over one million Co-Workers across 40 countries**, spreading Mother Teresa's spirit of compassion.
  - **She received numerous accolades**, including the **Pope John XXIII Peace Prize (1971), the Nehru Prize (1972), and the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979** for her tireless work in promoting peace and understanding.
- Mother Teresa **passed away on 5th September 1997,** leaving behind a lasting legacy of compassion and service.
  - She was **canonized (declared as a saint)** by **Pope Francis in 2016**, further cementing her status as one of the most beloved humanitarian figures in the world.

Note: Mother Teresa remains the **only naturalised citizen** to have been **awarded India's highest civilian honour, the Bharat Ratna (1980).**

- She is also one of **only two foreigners** to have **received the Bharat Ratna.** The **other is Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan**, known as the "Frontier Gandhi," who was honoured in 1987.

India to Host FIDE World Cup 2025

Why in News?

PM Narendra Modi expressed India's pride in hosting the **prestigious FIDE World Cup 2025**, marking its **return to Indian soil after more than two decades (23 years).**

- The tournament will **take place in Goa from 30th October to 27th November** with a **USD 2 million prize purse** and three berths for next year's Candidates Tournament.
- The **206-player field includes top players** such as World Champion D Gukesh, Magnus Carlsen, Fabiano Caruana, and India's R Praggnanandhaa.

Key Points

- **India's Previous Hosting: India last organized the FIDE World Cup in 2002 in Hyderabad,** where **Viswanathan Anand won** the tournament with Rustam Kasimdzhanov as the runner-up.
- **About Chess: Chess originated in northern India** during the **Gupta Empire around the 6th century CE,** known as **chaturanga.**
  - **Played on an 8×8 board**, it reflected **real-life warfare strategy with pieces** representing infantry, cavalry, elephants, and chariots.
  - The **game spread to Persia as shatranj,** then to Europe, where it evolved into modern chess by the 15th century, with key modifications like the queen and bishop's enhanced powers.
- **International Chess Day:** In **2019, the UN declared 20th July as International Chess Day,** recognizing its role in promoting education, peace, and gender equality, supporting the **2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG 4), (SDG 11 and 16), and (SDG 5).**
- **FIDE:** The **FIDE World Cup 2025 is organized by FIDE** (International Chess Federation), which is the governing body for chess worldwide.
  - The All India Chess Federation (AICF) is serving as the local organizer in collaboration with FIDE.
  - In **1924, FIDE was founded in Paris,** formalizing chess as an international sport.

Read more: FIDE World Cup 2025 to be Hosted in India

Exercise BRIGHT STAR 2025

Why in News?

The **Ministry of Defence** announced that over 700 personnel from the **Armed Forces** and the **Headquarters Integrated Defence Staff** will participate in the Multilateral Exercise 'BRIGHT STAR 2025' from 28 August 2025 to 10 September 2025.

- The exercise, **hosted by Egypt** in collaboration with the United States and involving multiple countries, including India, will last for 13 days.

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Key Points

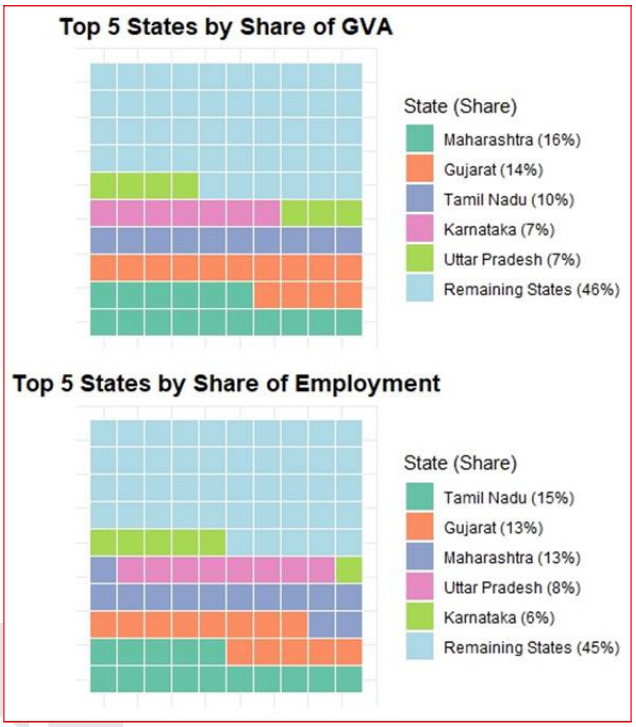
- **About: Exercise Bright Star** is a **biennial multilateral military exercise** hosted by **Egypt** in collaboration with the **United States** since **1980**.
  - It is one of the **largest Tri-Service multilateral exercises** in the region. The last edition of the exercise took place in **2023**, with participation from several countries, including India.
- **Activities and Features:** The exercise will feature a **comprehensive spectrum of military activities**, including:
  - **Live Firing Exercises**: Demonstrating the operational capabilities of the **Indian Army**, Indian Navy, and Indian Air Force.
  - **Command Post Exercise**: Designed to enhance **joint planning**, **decision-making**, and **operational coordination** among participating forces.
  - **Short Training Exercises**: These exercises will focus on various aspects of **modern warfare** and will be conducted by all three services.
  - **Subject Matter Expert Interactions**: Discussions and collaborations with experts across multiple domains of **contemporary military operations**.
- **Significance:** India's participation in **Exercise BRIGHT STAR 2025** highlights its **commitment to regional peace, stability, and security**. The exercise also aims to foster enhanced **jointness**, **interoperability**, and **cooperation** between the **Indian Armed Forces** and other friendly nations.

UP Leads India's Industrial Surge

Why in News?

Uttar Pradesh (UP) has set a new benchmark in industrial development, according to the Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) 2023-24 released by the **Union Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.**

- The state has outperformed all major industrial states on **three key parameters:** gross value added (GVA), number of factories and employment generation.



Key Points

- **Gross Value Added (GVA):** The state's **GVA** rose from **Rs 1.34 lakh crore in 2022-23** to **Rs 1.67 lakh crore in 2023-24**, reflecting a **25.03%** increase.
  - This is more than **double the national average** of **11.9%**. As a result, Uttar Pradesh has secured the **top rank among Indian states** for GVA growth.
- **Number of Factories:** UP has witnessed a significant increase in the number of factories, growing from **19,102 in 2022-23** to **22,141 in 2023-24**—a growth of **15.91%**.
  - This growth is nearly **seven times higher** than the national average of **2.7%**.
  - Uttar Pradesh holds an **8.51% share** of the total number of factories in India, ranking **4th in the country** after **Tamil Nadu** (15.43%), **Gujarat** (12.81%), and **Maharashtra** (10.20%).
- **Employment Generation:** Employment in UP's industrial sector grew from **14.86 lakh in 2022-23** to **16.26 lakh in 2023-24**, representing a growth of **9.37%**—well above the **all-India average of 5.9%**.

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- Uttar Pradesh has joined **Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Karnataka** among the **top 5 states** for industrial employment. The state's share in national employment stands at **8%**.

Annual Survey of Industries (ASI)

- **About:** The Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) is the primary source of industrial statistics in India.
  - It began in 1960, using 1959 as the base year, and has been conducted annually since then, with the exception of 1972, in accordance with the Collection of Statistics Act of 1953.
  - Since ASI 2010-11, the survey has been conducted under the Collection of Statistics Act, 2008, which was amended in 2017 to extend its coverage to All India.
- **Implementing Agency:** The National Statistical Office (NSO), a part of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), conducts the ASI.
  - The MoSPI is responsible for ensuring the coverage and quality of the released statistics.
- **Scope:** The ASI extends to the entire country. It covers all factories registered under Sections 2(m)(i) and 2(m)(ii) of the Factories Act, 1948.

UP Announces Firecracker Ban in NCR Districts

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh government has **declared a complete ban** on the manufacturing, storage, sale, and use of firecrackers in the **National Capital Region (NCR) districts of the state.**

Key Points

- **Coverage:** The ban applies to **eight districts** under the Delhi-NCR region, including Meerut, Ghaziabad, Gautam Budh Nagar, Bulandshahr, Hapur, Baghpat, Shamli, and Muzaffarnagar.
- **Legal Framework:** The ban is implemented ahead of the festive season, including Dussehra and Diwali, in compliance with a **Supreme Court directive** to reduce pollution levels in the NCR.
  - The violation will invite imprisonment for up to five years and a fine of up to Rs 1 lakh, or both under **Section 15 of the** Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
    - **Section 15** empowers the Central Government to instruct any authority or officer to act for environmental protection.
  - For repeat offenses, an **additional fine of Rs 5,000 per day** will be imposed until compliance is achieved.
- **Objectives of the Ban:**
  - **Air Pollution Control:** The ban is aimed at **addressing the annual surge in air pollution** during the festive season, particularly caused by the use of firecrackers.
  - **Public Health Protection:** The measure seeks to **protect public health** from the harmful effects of air pollution, especially during the high-pollution months.

Environment (Protection) Act, 1986

- The EPA, 1986, was passed by the Parliament in the wake of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy, highlighting the urgent need for a comprehensive law to protect the environment and public health.
- EPA enacted under Article 253 of the Constitution (empowers the Parliament to enact laws for implementing international agreements) to fulfill international commitments made at the 1972 Stockholm Conference.
- The Act empowers the Central Government to prevent, control, and respond to environmental pollution. It allows the Centre to set standards, regulate emissions, shut down polluting industries, and control essential services.
- **Article 48A** directs the State to protect the environment, forests, and wildlife, while **Article 51**A makes it the duty of every citizen of India to protect and improve the natural environment.

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World Water Week 2025

Why in News?

World Water Week, a leading global conference on **water-related issues**, was held in Stockholm, Sweden, from 24th - 28th August 2025.

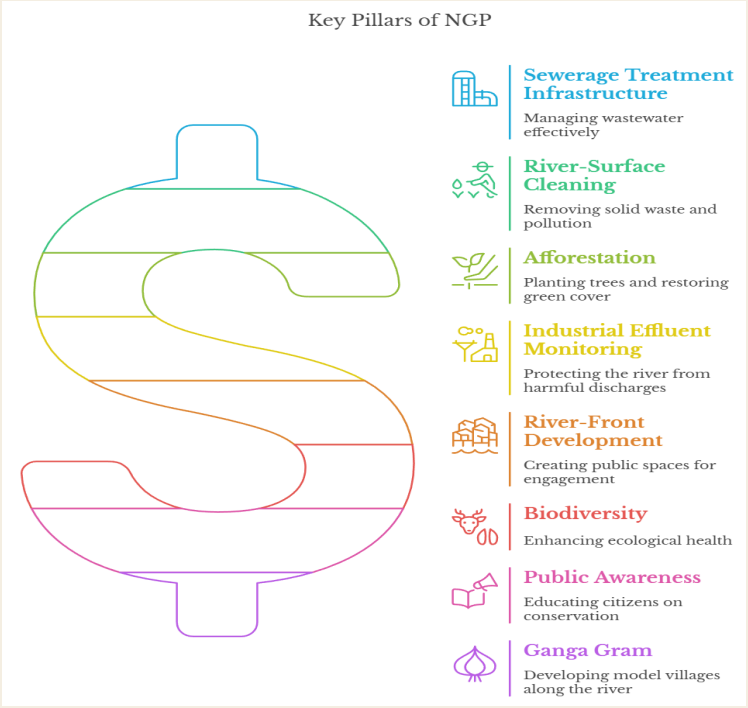
- During the event, the **National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG)** was recognized as a global inspiration for river revival and community-driven efforts.

Key Points

- **About:** Established in **1991**, this event is organized by the **Stockholm International Water Institute (SIWI)** and provides a critical platform for the exchange of knowledge, solutions, and commitments related to water management.
  - The 2025 edition, marking its 35th year, focused on the theme ***'Water for Climate Action'***, highlighting the role of water in tackling climate change and achieving sustainable development.
- **India's Role:** During World Water Week 2025, NMCG was part of the session *'River Cities Reimagined: Climate-Smart and Basin-Centric Urban Development'*, which highlighted the role of **river-centric urban development** in ensuring climate-resilient cities.
  - The session highlighted the benefits of **sustainable urban planning** and the need for **basin-centric approaches** that consider the entire river ecosystem.
  - The session was led by NMCG, the National Institute of Urban Affairs (NIUA), and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).

Namami Gange Mission

- **About:** It is a **flagship programme** for the rejuvenation of the **Ganga River** and its tributaries by reducing pollution, improving water quality, and restoring the river's ecosystem.
- **Implementation:** Under the **Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM)**, a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) by the winning bidder handles STP development, operation, and maintenance.
  - 40% of costs are paid post-construction, 60% over the project's lifespan.



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India Water Week (IWW)

- The **Ministry of Jal Shakti, Government of India,** conceptualized and launched India Water Week **in 2012,** and it is now organized **biannually.**
- It is aimed at **addressing critical challenges** pertaining to water management and fostering innovation in water-related technologies and practices.
- IWW has evolved into a **crucial platform in global water diplomacy**, facilitating dialogue, innovation, and knowledge exchange on critical water-related challenges.

AI-Powered UP Skill Gap Dashboard

Why in News?

The Uttar Pradesh Skill Development Mission (UPSDM) has launched an innovative tool called the **AI-powered UP Skill Gap Dashboard** to enhance employability across the state.

Key Points

- **About:** The initiative marks the **first time AI is being used to assess** district-wise skill needs in Uttar Pradesh, aiding in the **creation of livelihood opportunities** at the local level.
- **Features:**
  - **AI and Data Analytics Integration**: The dashboard employs **advanced** machine learning algorithms and data analytics to analyze district-specific sectors and employment data.
    - It receives **district-wise data** for major sectors and industries, as well as **trade-specific demands** from training partners.
  - **District-Specific Skill Assessment**: The dashboard helps identify skill gaps in various districts, providing a comprehensive **skill assessment**.
    - It recommends the necessary training based on the **sector-specific growth** and **employment needs** in each district.
- **Benefits:**
  - **District-Level Skill Development**: The dashboard offers a **scientific analysis** of skill needs across districts, indicating areas that require trained manpower.
    - It helps in better allocation of **training targets** based on local requirements, improving **employability** within each district.
  - **Reduction of Attrition**: By ensuring that training is aligned with local job markets, the dashboard helps reduce **attrition** due to candidates seeking jobs outside their home districts.
  - **Involvement of Industries as Training Partners**: For the first time, industries have been involved as **training partners** in the skill development process.
    - More than **45 industries** are now actively contributing to **industry-specific training** efforts.
  - **Training Partner Evaluation**: Training partners are evaluated based on their **past performance** in training and placement.
    - The top-performing partners are allocated training targets, ensuring that **high-quality training** is provided to candidates.
  - **AI-Powered Insights for Training Target Allocation**: The dashboard uses **real-time data scraping** and **primary research** to project sector-wise **training targets**.
    - It maps the **top industries**, **job roles**, and **skill gaps** in each district, ensuring accurate and up-to-date information for training programs.
- **Integration:** The system integrates with a Large Language Model-powered chatbot to provide **interactive support** for UPSDM.
  - The AI-based tool offers real-time assistance, guiding users through the process and answering queries related to training and employment.

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