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12 OCTOBER 2025

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Daily News Analysis

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SUNDAY, 12th OCTOBER 2025

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1. Right to Information (RTI) Act

- Prelims - Right to Information Act
- Mains - GS 2 - Polity

Right to Information (RTI) Act

Why in the news?

- As the Right To Information (RTI) Act completes 20 years on October 12, 2025

Right to Information (RTI) Act

- The RTI Act came into force with effect from October 2005.
- RTI is an act of the parliament of India which sets out the principles and techniques in regards to citizens' right to information. It supplanted the previous Freedom of Information Act, 2002.
- Ministry** - Department of Personnel and Training, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions.
- Objective** - Empower the citizens, promote transparency and accountability in the working of the Government, contain corruption, and make our democracy work for the people in real sense.

Significance of Act

- It protects the fundamental rights to Freedom of Expression and Speech under Article 19(1)(a) and Right to Life and Personal Liberty under Article 21 guaranteed by the Constitution.

Exceptions Under Second Schedule of Act

- Security agency like Intelligence Bureau, Research and Analysis Wing, Directorate of Enforcement, National Technical Research Organisation
- Strategic Forces Command
- Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Border Roads Development Board
- Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT - In)

Difference between RTI Act, 2005 and RTI Amendment Act, 2019

Term	Quantum of salary	Deductions in salary
CHIEF information commissioner (CIC) and information commissioners will have a tenure of five years	CIC pay equivalent to CECs, Central ICs and state CIC to election commissioners and state ICs to chief secretary	IF such officials are receiving pension or other retirement benefits, their salaries will be reduced by an amount equal to the pension
CENTRE will notify the tenure of all information commissioners (ICs) at state and central level	SALARIES and allowances of these officers will be determined by the Central government	THESE provisions have been removed

Source: PRS Legislative Research

The diagram illustrates the RTI Application Procedure in a circular flow with six steps:

1. Identify the issue
2. Write application on plain paper
3. Pay required RTI application fees
4. PIO will transfer your application to concerned department
5. No action from PIO within 30 days, make 1st appeal to Appellate Authority
6. If still no response, make 2nd appeal to the Central & State Info Commission

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2. Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021

- **Prelims** - Surrogacy(Regulation) Act, 2021
- **Mains** - GS 2 - Polity

Why in the news?

- The Supreme Court ruled that the age restrictions under the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021, cannot be applied retrospectively to couples who had frozen embryos and initiated the surrogacy process before the Act came into force.

Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021

- **Background:** Before 2021, India was a global hub for commercial surrogacy, raising concerns over exploitation of poor women, legal disputes, and child trafficking.
- **Aim:** The Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021 was enacted to regulate surrogacy practices and prohibit their commercialization.
- **Came into force:** 25 January 2022 along with the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Act, 2021.
- **Objectives:**
 - To prohibit commercial surrogacy and allow only altruistic surrogacy.
 - To protect the rights of surrogate mothers and children.
 - To regulate clinics and ensure ethical medical practices.
- **Permitted Surrogacy:**
 - Only altruistic surrogacy is permitted for:
 - ★ Indian married couples, or
 - ★ Widowed/divorced women (specific age criteria).
 - Purpose: Only for infertility or medical reasons certified by a District Medical Board.
- **Eligibility Criteria:**
 - **For Intending Couple:**
 - ★ Indian citizens, married for ≥ 5 years.
 - ★ Age: Husband 26–55 yrs, Wife 25–50 yrs.
 - ★ Must be infertile and have no surviving biological, adopted, or surrogate child.
 - ★ Must use their own gametes (as per 2023 amendment).



→ **For Surrogate Mother:**

- ★ Married woman aged 25–35 yrs.
 - ★ Must have one biological child of her own.
 - ★ Can act as surrogate only once.
 - ★ Must undergo medical and psychological screening.
 - ★ Provided insurance coverage for 36 months.
- **Institutional architecture:** National/State Surrogacy Boards; Appropriate Authorities for licensing, compliance, and ethics.
 - **Penalties:** Commercial surrogacy, embryo/gamete sale can attract up to 10 years' imprisonment and fines up to ₹10 lakh.
 - **Issues:**
 - Excludes LGBTQIA+ individuals, single men, and foreign nationals → violation of equality.
 - Ban on compensation may drive surrogacy underground.
 - The complex certification process delays access.
 - Lack of uniform implementation across states.



3. Great Green Wall Project and Senegal

- **Prelims** - Great Green Wall Project and Senegal
- **Mains** - GS 3 - Environment

Why in the news?

- Despite ambitious goals to restore 100 million hectares of land across Africa, the Great Green Wall project faces significant challenges in Senegal.

Great Green Wall Project

- **Launch:** Launched by African Union in 2007
- **Supported by:** UNCCD (United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification), FAO, UNEP, World Bank, and Global Environment Facility (GEF).
- **Geographical Coverage:**
 - **Region:** Sahel – stretches from Senegal (West Africa) to Djibouti (East Africa).
 - **Length:** ~8,000 km
 - **Width:** ~15 km average
 - **Covers:** 11 core countries – Senegal, Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Chad, Sudan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Djibouti.
 - **Extended to:** 20+ countries in the Sahel and Horn of Africa regions.
- **Objectives:**
 - **Combat Desertification:** Halt land degradation and restore soil fertility.
 - **Climate Change Mitigation:** Enhance carbon sequestration through vegetation.
 - **Livelihood Improvement:** Provide food security, jobs, and resilience for communities.
 - **Biodiversity Conservation:** Restore native species and protect ecosystems.
 - **Water Conservation:** Improve water retention and groundwater recharge.
- **Targets (2030 Vision):**
 - Restore **100 million hectares** of degraded land
 - Sequester **250 million tonnes of carbon**
 - Create **10 million green jobs** in rural areas.



- **Funding:**
 - Supported by international agencies: World Bank, GEF, European Union, African Development Bank, UNCCD, etc.
 - \$14 billion funding package announced at the One Planet Summit (2021) in Paris.
- **Implementation Strategy:**
 - Agroforestry and sustainable land management.
 - Reforestation and natural regeneration of native vegetation.
 - Community participation and land tenure reforms.
 - Integration with UNCCD's Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) targets.
- **Challenges:**
 - Inadequate funding and coordination among member states.
 - Political instability and conflicts in the Sahel region.
 - Poor monitoring and maintenance of restored areas.
 - Limited local community involvement in some projects.

Senegal

Why in the news?

- Despite ambitious goals to restore 100 million hectares of land across Africa, the Great Green Wall project faces significant challenges in Senegal.

Senegal

- Location:** Senegal is the westernmost country in Africa.
- Capital:** Dakar
- Borders:** Mauritania, Mali, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Senegal nearly surrounds Gambia.
- Maritime Border:** Cape Verde.
- Geography**
 - Located in Sahel region.
 - The region has tropical climate
- International Grouping:** ECOWAS, African Union.

7994058393

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4. Atacama Desert

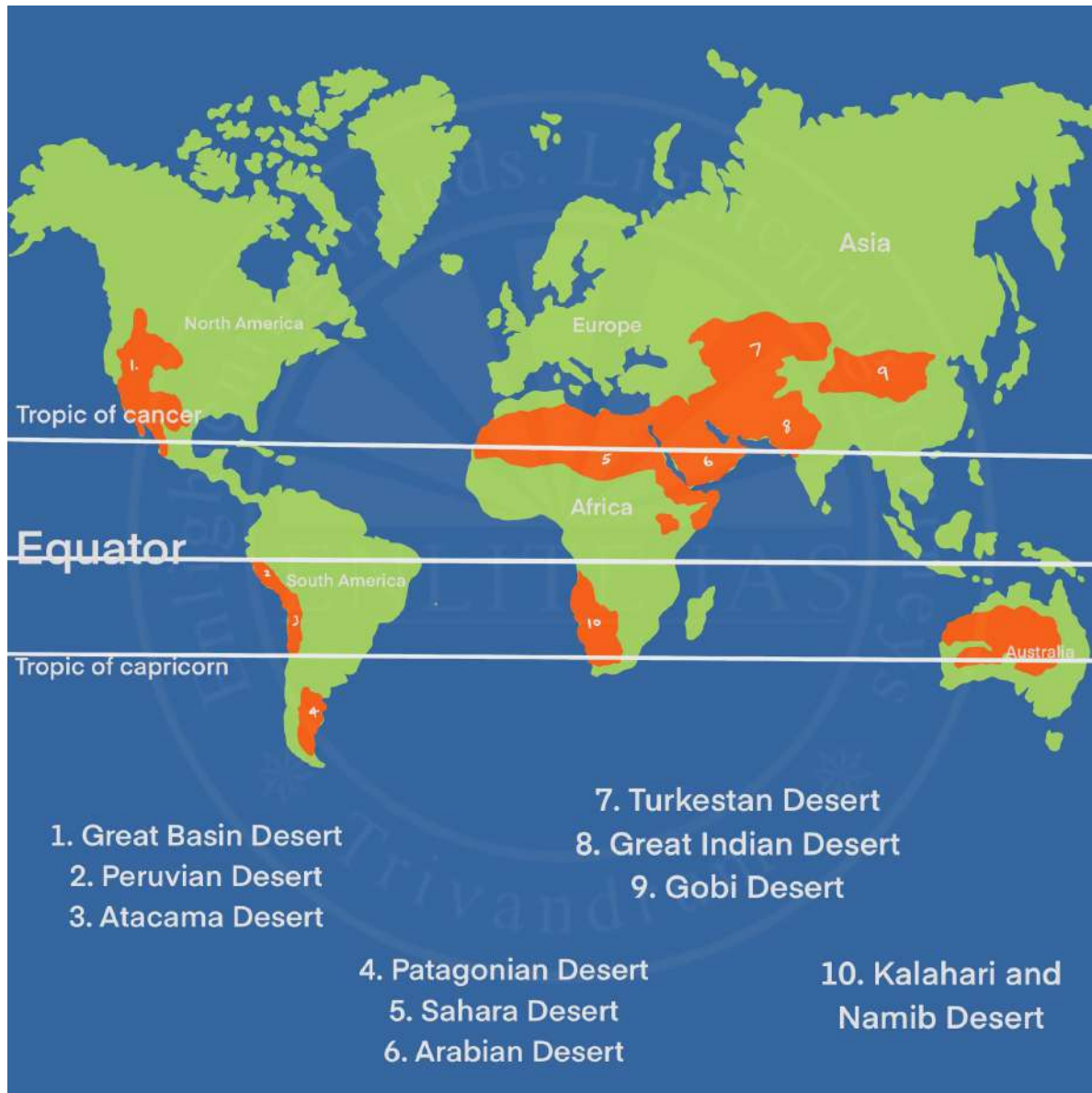
- Prelims - Atacama Desert
- Mains - GS 1 - Geography

Why in the news?

- A rare burst of winter rains has triggered the “desierto florido” phenomenon in Chile’s Atacama Desert, turning one of Earth’s driest landscapes into sweeping carpets of fuchsia wildflowers visible from space.

Atacama Desert

- **Location**
 - Lies along the Pacific coast of South America, mainly in northern Chile.
 - Extends into southern Peru.
 - Lies between the Andes Mountains (east) and Chilean Coast Range (west).
- **Causes of Formation**
 - **Cold Humboldt (Peru) Current:** Flows northward along the coast, cooling the air and preventing evaporation → leads to temperature inversion and suppressed rainfall.
 - **Rain Shadow Effect of the Andes:** Moist air from the Amazon Basin rises and cools over the Andes, resulting in precipitation on the eastern slopes, while dry descending air is left on the western side (Atacama).
 - **Subtropical High Pressure Belt (STHP):** The descending limb of the Hadley Cell (~30°S) creates stable, dry atmospheric conditions.
 - **Cold Offshore Winds & Inversion Layer:** Prevent upward convection, causing fog (“camanchaca”) but no rainfall.





5. National Green Hydrogen Mission

- **Prelims** - National Green Hydrogen Mission
- **Mains** - GS 3 - Economy

Why in the news?

- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has designated Deendayal, V.O. Chidambaranar, and Paradip ports as Green Hydrogen Hubs under the National Green Hydrogen Mission.

National Green Hydrogen Mission

- **Launched in:** January 2023 by the Union Cabinet.
- **Implemented by:** Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).
- **Aims:** To make India a global hub for the production, use, and export of green hydrogen and its derivatives.
- **Objectives:**
 - Develop a domestic green hydrogen industry and reduce dependency on fossil fuels.
 - Promote low-carbon economy and decarbonize hard-to-abate sectors.
 - Create employment opportunities and promote R&D and innovation in hydrogen technologies.
 - Enable energy self-reliance and support India's commitment to Net Zero by 2070.
- **Targets:**
 - Produce 5 million metric tonnes (MMT) of green hydrogen annually.
 - Add about 125 GW of renewable energy capacity for hydrogen production.
 - Create over 6 lakh jobs in associated sectors.
 - Reduce CO₂ emissions by nearly 50 million tonnes per year.
 - Attract investment of over ₹8 lakh crore.
 - Make India capable of supplying 10% of global green hydrogen demand.
- **Key Components:**
 - **SIGHT Programme (Strategic Interventions for Green Hydrogen Transition):** Provides financial incentives for electrolyser manufacturing and green hydrogen production.



- **Green Hydrogen Hubs:** Development of specific regions with renewable energy potential and industrial demand for hydrogen (e.g., Gujarat, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu).
- **Pilot Projects:** Focus on fertilisers, refineries, steel, and heavy transport as early adopter sectors.
- **Policy & Regulations:**
 - ★ Waiver of inter-state transmission charges for renewable energy used in hydrogen production.
 - ★ Priority grid connectivity and open access for renewable projects.
 - ★ Creation of standards, safety codes, and certification mechanisms.
- **Research & Development:** Support for R&D on electrolyser efficiency, hydrogen storage, fuel cells, and transportation technologies.
- **Benefits:**
 - Helps decarbonize key industries and reduce oil import dependence.
 - Promotes Atmanirbhar Bharat in the clean energy sector.
 - Establishes India as a leader in the global hydrogen economy.
 - Boosts employment, innovation, and industrial growth.
 - Enhances energy security and supports sustainable development goals.
- **Challenges:**
 - High cost of production compared to fossil-based hydrogen.
 - Infrastructure gaps in transport, storage, and distribution.
 - Water requirement for electrolysis, especially in arid regions.
 - Uncertain market demand and lack of price parity with conventional fuels.
 - Technological dependence and need for domestic electrolyser production.
 - Regulatory coordination among multiple ministries and states.



6. La Nina

- Prelims - La Nina
- Mains - GS 1 - Geography

Why in the news?

- Experts suggest that La Niña may lead to a colder winter in several parts of India, especially in the northern region. It may result in cold waves and increased snowfall in hilly regions

La Nina

- **What is it?**: La Niña (means The Little Girl in Spanish) is a climatic phenomenon characterized by cooler-than-average sea surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean, along with some changes in atmospheric circulation. It's essentially the opposite of El Niño.
- **Mechanism of La Niña Formation**
 - **Strengthening of Trade Winds**: Easterly trade winds blow more strongly than usual from South America → Indonesia.
 - **Warm-Water Displacement**: These winds push warm surface water westwards, causing it to pile up near Australia and Indonesia.
 - **Upwelling of Cold Water**: To replace the displaced warm water, cold nutrient-rich water upwells from the deeper ocean along the Peruvian and Ecuadorian coasts.
 - **Cooling of Eastern Pacific**: The SSTs of the central and eastern tropical Pacific drop by ~0.5 °C or more below normal.
 - **Enhanced Walker Circulation**: Rising motion over the warm western Pacific and sinking motion over the eastern Pacific intensify rainfall in Asia–Australia and suppress it near the Americas.
 - **Teleconnections**: The altered circulation shifts the jet streams, influencing rainfall, temperature, and storm patterns worldwide.
- **Global Impacts of La Niña:**
 - Generally leads to cooler global average temperatures than El Niño years.



>> Kozhikode

>> Ernakulam

>> Thiruvananthapuram

- Associated with heavy rainfall and floods in parts of Southeast Asia, Australia, and South America, and drier conditions in the US west coast and eastern Africa.
- May increase Atlantic hurricane activity due to reduced vertical wind shear.
- **Impact on India:**
 - **Rainfall and Monsoon:**
 - ★ It usually brings above-normal monsoon rainfall in India.
 - ★ Enhances southwest monsoon strength, leading to better kharif crop yields.
 - ★ Reduces the likelihood of droughts (in contrast to El Niño years).
 - **Temperature and Winter Conditions (2025–26):**
 - ★ Expected to bring a colder-than-usual winter, especially in North India.
 - ★ Likely to cause cold waves and higher snowfall in Himalayan and hilly regions.
 - **Agriculture and Water Availability:**
 - ★ Favors rabi sowing due to increased soil moisture from good monsoon rains.
 - ★ Could improve reservoir storage and groundwater recharge.
 - **However, Global Warming May Offset Cooling:**
 - ★ The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) notes that despite La Niña, global mean temperatures remain above normal.
 - ★ Anthropogenic climate change is weakening traditional ENSO effects, altering expected rainfall and temperature patterns.

