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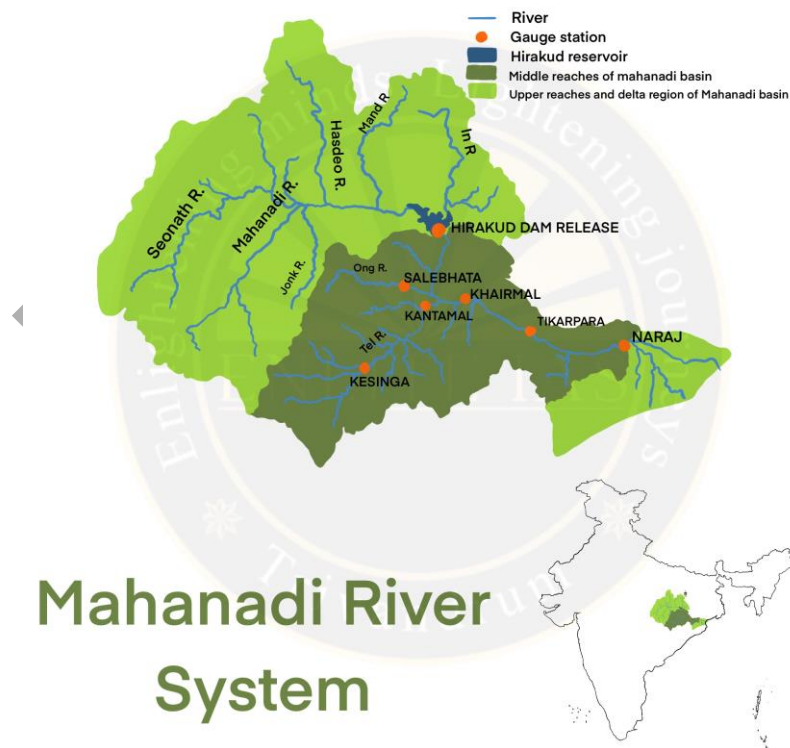
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GEOGRAPHY

1. Mahanadi River System (Source: The Indian Express)

- **Fact:** It is the third-largest peninsular river system and the largest in Odisha.
- **Mahanadi River Basin States:** Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, and Madhya Pradesh.
- **Borders:** Central India hills on the north, the Eastern Ghats on the south and east, and the Maikala range on the west.
- **Source:** The northern foothills of Dandakaranya in Raipur District, Chhattisgarh.
- **Dam:** The largest dam on the river is the Hirakud Dam.
- **Tributaries**
 - **Left Bank:** Seonath, Hasdeo, Mand, and Ib rivers.
 - **Right Bank:** Ong, Tel, and Jonk rivers.
- **Religious Significance:** The pilgrimage site of Puri is located at its mouth.
- **Economic Significance:** The region is known for its Iron and Steel plant at Bhilai, aluminum factories at Hirakud and Korba, the paper mill near Cuttack, and the cement factory at Sundargarh.



2. Factors Influencing Indian Monsoon (Source: The Indian Express)

Somali Jet

- *The Somali Jet is a fast-moving air stream over the Horn of Africa, flowing from southwest to northeast over the Arabian Sea during the Southwest Monsoon (June to September).*
- It plays a vital role in the onset of the Indian Southwest Monsoon, helping to pull moist air from the Indian Ocean toward India, initiating monsoon rains.
- The jet is crucial for moisture transport, delivering moist air into the Indian subcontinent, which brings heavy rainfall during the monsoon.
- The strength and direction of the Somali Jet affect the distribution and amount of rainfall, with a strong jet ensuring more rainfall and a weak jet causing droughts or reduced rainfall.
- Monsoon breaks (dry spells during the monsoon) are influenced by shifts or weakening of the Somali Jet.
- The Somali Jet is impacted by climate phenomena like El Niño and La Niña, with El Niño weakening the jet and reducing monsoon rains, while La Niña strengthens it.
- The jet also interacts with the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), which can influence the jet's strength and the monsoon's performance.

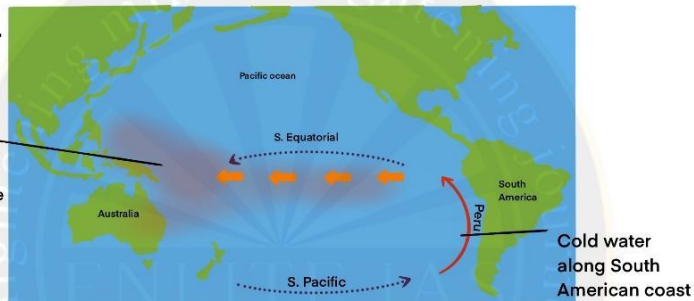
EL -Nino / La – Nina

- **El Niño**
 - o Causes monsoon deficit and reduced rainfall in India.
 - o Weakens the Somali Jet, decreasing moisture flow to India.
 - o Leads to droughts, delayed monsoons, and crop failures.
- **La Niña**
 - o Causes above-average rainfall and intense monsoons in India.
 - o Strengthens the Somali Jet, bringing more moisture to the subcontinent.

THE EL NINO PHENOMENON

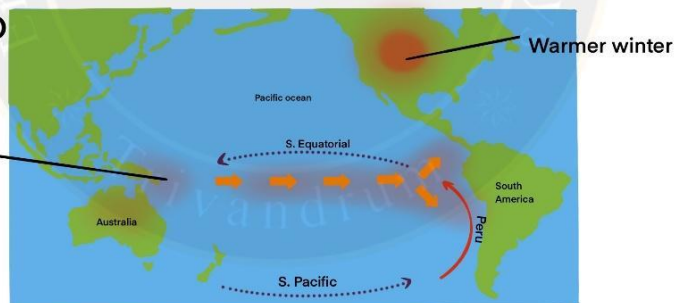
NORMAL YEAR

Equatorial winds gather warm water pool toward the west



EL NINO YEAR

Easterly winds weaken warm water to move eastward.

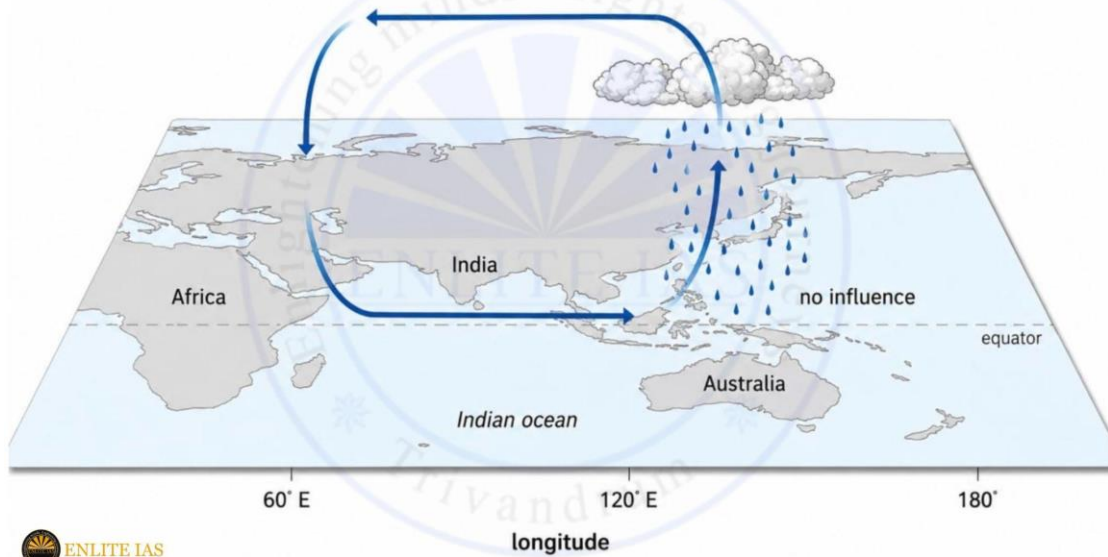


Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)

- *The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is a climatic phenomenon in the Indian Ocean that influences the monsoon season in India. It refers to the difference in sea surface temperatures between the western and eastern parts of the Indian Ocean.*
- **Impact**
 - **Positive IOD**
 - Warmer western Indian Ocean, cooler eastern Indian Ocean.
 - Enhances monsoon rainfall over India.
 - Leads to stronger monsoon winds and better moisture supply.
 - Associated with above-average rainfall.
 - **Negative IOD**
 - Cooler western Indian Ocean, warmer eastern Indian Ocean.
 - Weakens the monsoon and causes below-average rainfall.
 - Can lead to drought conditions in parts of India.

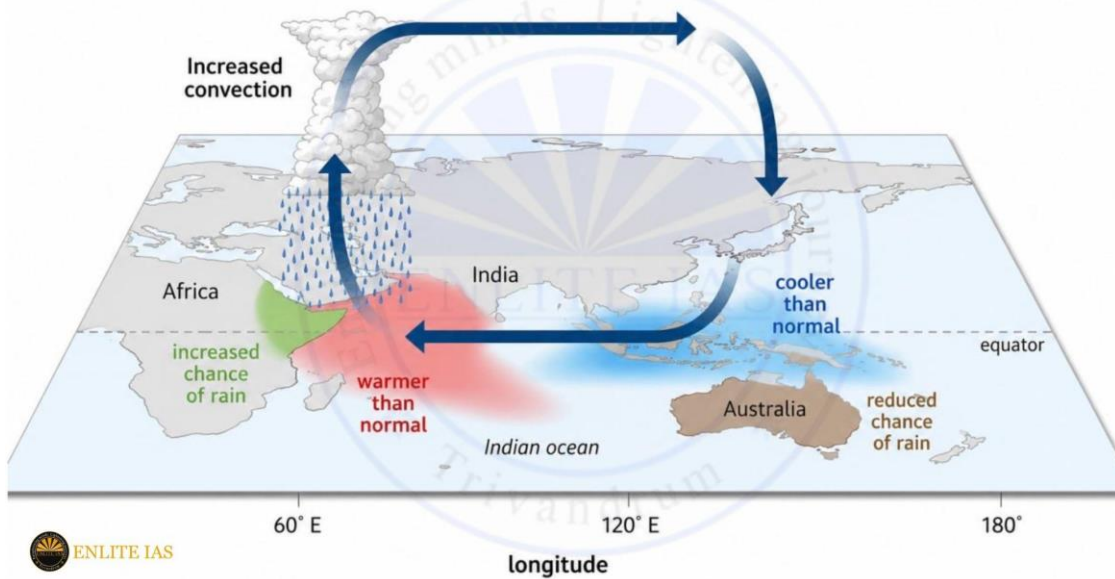
INDIAN OCEAN DIPOLE

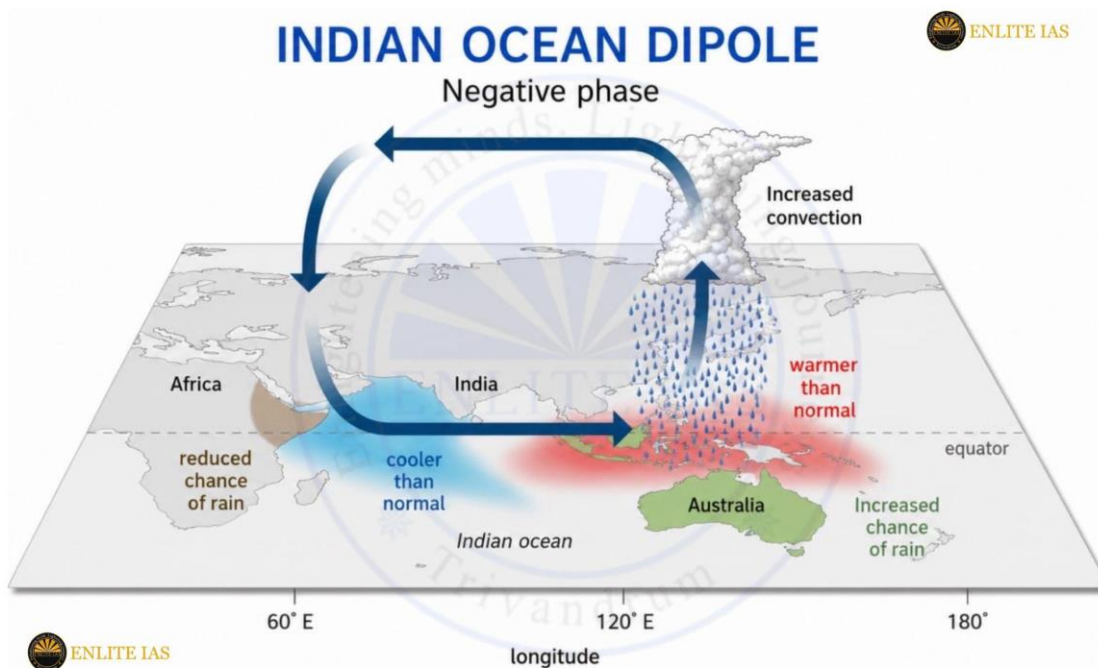
Neutral phase



INDIAN OCEAN DIPOLE

Positive phase

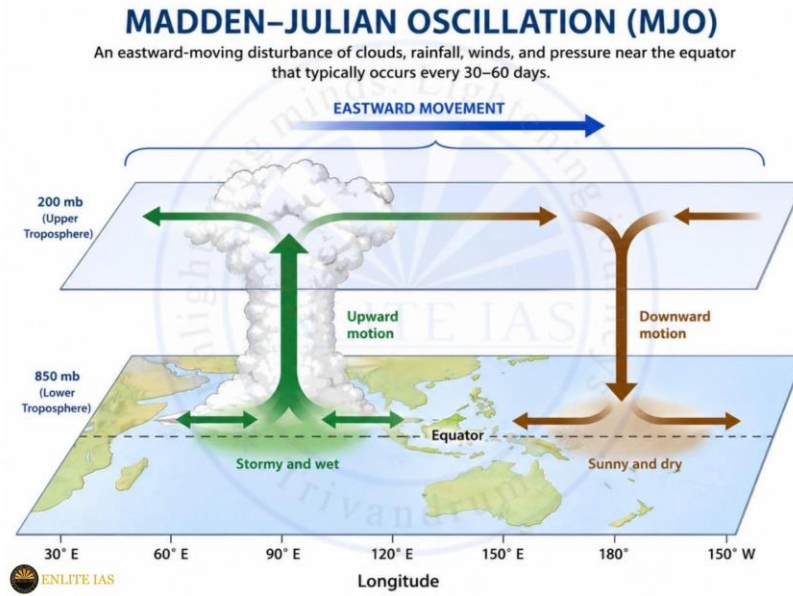




Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO)

A tropical atmospheric phenomenon with an eastward-moving pulse of convection and circulation, typically taking 30-60 days for a complete cycle.

- **MJO Phases**
 - **Phase 1 (Convective):** Enhances monsoon rainfall over India.
 - **Phase 2 (Suppressed):** Reduces monsoon rainfall, causing dry spells.
 - **Phase 3 (Convective):** Strengthens monsoon, leading to increased rainfall.
 - **Phase 4 (Suppressed):** Causes drier conditions, leading to a break in the monsoon.
- **Monsoon Impact**
 - **Active Phases (Phase 1 & 3):** Result in enhanced rainfall and stronger monsoon conditions.
 - **Suppressed Phases (Phase 2 & 4):** Lead to dry spells and reduced rainfall.



3. Pyrocumulonimbus Clouds (Source: The Indian Express)

They are thunderstorm clouds (cumulonimbus) that develop due to intense heat generated by large wildfires, volcanic eruptions, or massive explosions

Formation

- A large wildfire or volcanic eruption generates intense heat.
- Hot air rises rapidly, carrying smoke, ash, and water vapour.
- Rising air cools and condenses into a pyrocumulus cloud.
- Continued uplift forms a cumulonimbus cloud.
- The cloud produces lightning, strong winds, rain (sometimes), and even hail.

Impact

- Inject smoke and black carbon into the stratosphere.
- Influences global climate by altering radiation balance.
- Reduces air quality over vast regions.
- Makes wildfire behaviour highly unpredictable.
- Lightning from the cloud may trigger secondary fires.

4. Kaveri River (Source: The Hindu)

- **Origin:** Talakaveri on the Brahmagiri range, Kodagu (Coorg) district of Karnataka.
- **Other Name:** The Cauvery River (Kaveri) is designated as the 'Dakshin Bharat ki Ganga' or 'the Ganga of the South'.
- **Length:** 800 km

- **Basin States:** Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, and the Union Territory of Puducherry
- **Passing States:** Tamil Nadu, Karnataka.
- **Borders:** It is bordered on the west by the Western Ghats, on the east and south by the Eastern Ghats, and the north by the ridges that separate it from the Krishna and Pennar basins.
- **Major Dams:** Krishnarajasagar in Karnataka, Mettur dam in Tamil Nadu..
- **Waterfall:** Hogennekkal Falls.
- **Important Tributaries**
 - **Left:** Harangi, Hemavati, Shimsha, and Arkavati rivers.
 - **Right:** Lakshmana Tirtha, Kabbani, Suvarnavati, Bhavani, Noyil, and Amaravati rivers.

Kaveri River System



5. Betwa River (Source: Down To Earth)

- **Origin:** It originates from Jhiri village in Raisen district, Madhya Pradesh, in the Vindhya Range.
 - It is a tributary of the Yamuna River.
- **Passing States:** It flows generally northeast through Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh states.
- **Plateaus:** It runs over the Malwa Plateau before it breaks into the upland of Bundelkhand.
- **Tributaries:** The Jamni and Dhasan rivers are its major tributaries.
- **Dams:** The Betwa is dammed at Dukwan and Deogarh.

6. Types of Eclipses (Source: The Indian Express)

Solar Eclipses: *Solar eclipses happen on New Moon day when the Moon's shadow falls on Earth.*

- **Total Solar Eclipse**
 - Sun, Moon, and Earth are almost perfectly aligned.
 - Moon completely covers the Sun's disk for observers in the path of totality.
 - Only the faint solar corona is visible.
 - Visible only from a narrow strip on Earth.
- **Annular Solar Eclipse**
 - Alignment is similar to a total eclipse, but the Moon is near apogee (farthest from Earth).
 - Moon's apparent size is smaller than the Sun's.
 - A bright ring of sunlight remains visible around the Moon – the “Ring of Fire”.
 - No total darkness; corona is not fully visible.
- **Partial Solar Eclipse**
 - Sun, Moon, and Earth are not perfectly aligned.
 - Only a part of the Sun is covered by the Moon.
 - Appears as if a “bite” is taken out of the Sun.
 - Visible over a wider area than total/annular eclipses.

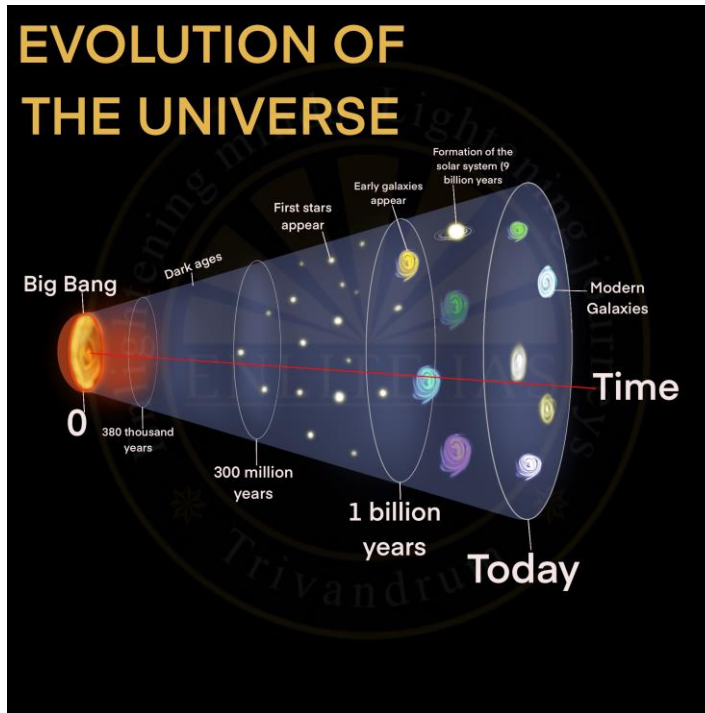
Lunar Eclipses: *Lunar eclipses occur on Full Moon day when Earth's shadow falls on the Moon.*

- **Total Lunar Eclipse**
 - Entire Moon passes through Earth's umbra.
 - Moon often appears reddish (“Blood Moon”) due to Rayleigh scattering of sunlight through Earth's atmosphere.

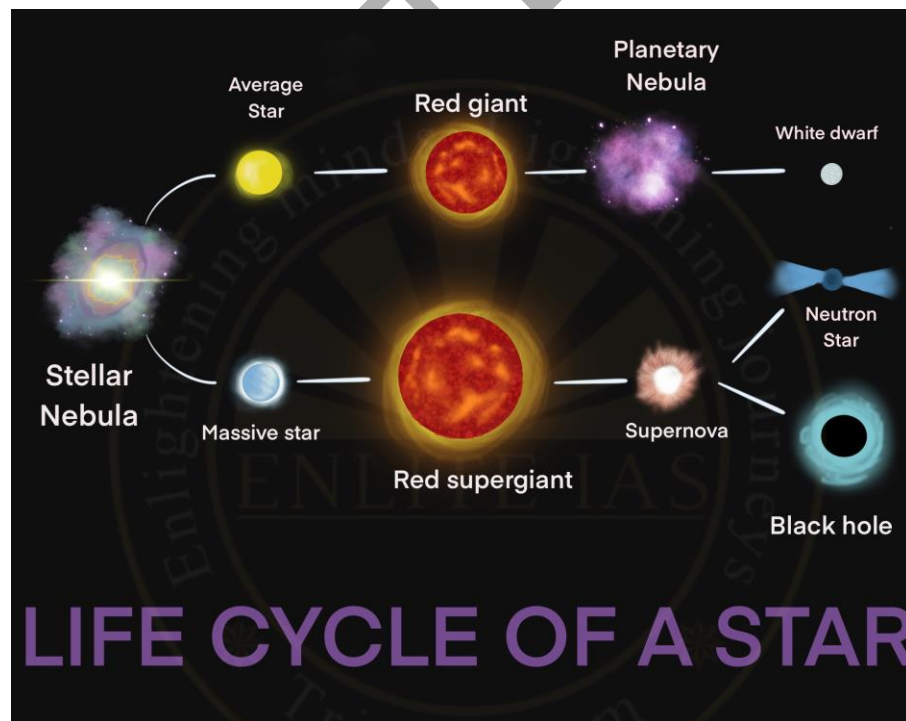
- Visible from the entire night side of Earth.
- **Partial Lunar Eclipse**
 - Only a part of the Moon enters Earth's umbra.
 - A dark "bite" is seen on the Moon's disk; rest remains bright.
 - More common than total lunar eclipses.
- **Penumbral Lunar Eclipse**
 - Moon passes only through Earth's penumbra, not the umbra.

7. Big Bang Theory (Source: The Hindu)

- *It is also called the expanding universe hypothesis.*
- *Edwin Hubble, in 1920, provided evidence that the universe is expanding.*
- Took place 13.7 billion years ago.
- Galaxies move further and further apart. Similarly, the distance between the galaxies is also found to be increasing, and thereby, the universe is considered to be expanding.
- Scientists believe that though the space between the galaxies is increasing, observations do not support the expansion of galaxies.
- **Stages of Development**
 - In the beginning, all matter forming the universe existed in one place in the form of a "tiny ball" (singular atom) with an unimaginably small volume, infinite temperature, and infinite density.
 - At the Big Bang the "tiny ball" exploded violently leading to a huge expansion.
 - The expansion continues even to the present day.
 - As it grew, some energy was converted into matter.
 - There was particularly rapid expansion within fractions of a second after the bang.
 - Thereafter, the expansion has slowed down. Within the first three minutes of the Big Bang event, the first atom began to form.
 - Within 300,000 years from the Big Bang, the temperature dropped to 4,500K (Kelvin) and gave rise to atomic matter.
 - The universe became transparent.



8. Life Cycle of A Star (Source: The Hindu)



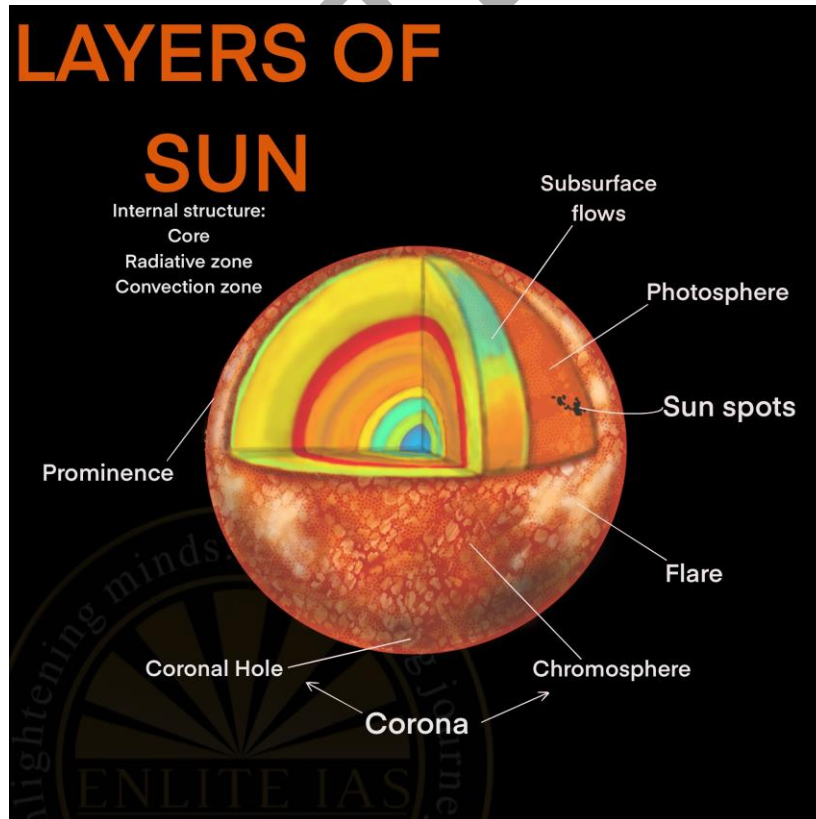
9. Solar Flares and Layers of the Sun (Source: The Hindu)

Solar Flares

- A solar flare is a sudden and intense burst of electromagnetic radiation from the Sun's atmosphere, caused by the rapid release of magnetic energy. They commonly occur near sunspots, where magnetic fields are highly active.

Layers of the Sun

- **Photosphere**
 - The photosphere is an extremely uneven, bright outer layer of the Sun that emits most of the radiation.
 - The temperature on the outer side of the photosphere is 6000°C .
- **Chromosphere**
 - Above the photosphere is the chromosphere.
 - It is a thin layer of burning gases.
 - It is comparatively cooler — 4320°C
- **Corona**
 - A corona is a distinctive atmosphere of plasma that surrounds the Sun and other celestial bodies.
 - The Sun's corona extends millions of kilometres into space and is most easily seen during a total solar eclipse.
 - Solar wind is an outflow of gas from the corona.



10. Urban Flooding (Source: The Hindu)

Urban flooding refers to the inundation of built-up areas when rainfall and surface runoff exceed the capacity of the city's drainage system.

- It is rapid and localised in nature.
- Example: Bangalore flooding (2022)

Causes

- **Climatic Factors**

- Rise in high-intensity rainfall events and extreme precipitation days (about 30% increase since 1950).
- Urban heat island effect intensifies local convection and rainfall.

- **Human Made Factors**

- **Unplanned Urban Sprawl:** Encroachment on floodplains, wetlands, lakes, and natural drains (e.g., Delhi lost ~60% of wetlands between 2000–2020).
- **Concretisation:** Reduces infiltration from ~40% to <10%, increasing surface runoff.
- **Inadequate/Outdated Drainage:** Stormwater drains designed for lower rainfall intensities (50–100 mm/hour) now face 150+ mm/hour events; poor maintenance and siltation worsen the problem.
- **Solid Waste Blocking Drains:** Plastic and garbage clog inlets and networks during monsoons.
- **Mixed Sewerage Systems:** Combined stormwater and sewage lines overflow during heavy rains.
- **Altered Topography:** Landfilling of water bodies and construction change natural flow paths.

Impact

- **Human:** Loss of life, injuries, displacement, waterborne diseases (cholera, leptospirosis, dengue).
- **Economic:** Damage to property, vehicles, businesses; disruption of supply chains and IT/industrial hubs; huge relief and reconstruction costs.
- **Infrastructure:** Damage to roads, bridges, metro, power and telecom networks.
- **Social:** Disproportionate impact on slums and low-lying settlements; school closures; livelihood loss.
- **Environmental:** Contamination of water sources, solid waste spread, degradation of urban ecosystems

HISTORY/ART & CULTURE

1. Gandhi's Idea of Civil Disobedience (Source: The Indian Express)

Mahatma Gandhi's idea of civil disobedience is a peaceful, disciplined refusal to obey unjust laws, which is designed to change the opponent's heart rather than defeat them.

Core Principles

- **Non-violence (Ahimsa):** Protests must avoid all physical harm to people or property.
- **Truth (Satya):** Actions must be moral, transparent, and anchored in truth.
- **Accepting Punishment:** Participants willingly face arrest and penalties to highlight the law's injustice.
- **Active Resistance:** It is a courageous tool of the strong, requiring more bravery than using weapons.

Historical Evidence

- South Africa (1906): First used to fight racial discrimination and unjust registration laws against Indians.
- The Salt March (1930): A 240-mile march from Sabermati Ashram to Dandi that shook the foundation of British colonial rule.

2. Bhil Uprising (1818–1831) (Source: The Indian Express)

It was one of the earliest major tribal resistance movements against British colonial rule in the Khandesh region.

- Used guerrilla warfare.

Causes of Revolt

- **Loss of Autonomy:** British occupation of Khandesh in 1818 dismantled traditional local governance and the safety the Bhils experienced.
- **Forest and Land Rights:** Introduction of strict colonial forest laws stripped the community of ancestral hunting and foraging rights, banning traditional timber use and local liquor distillation.
- **Economic Exploitation:** Heavy taxation and predatory lending practices by outside moneylenders and revenue officials forced widespread indebtedness and land alienation.

Leadership

- Mobilized by local leaders including Kaja Naik, Bhima Naik

Effect

- The British suppressed the revolt militarily and later followed by partial conciliatory policy to control the Bhils more effectively

3. Quit India Movement (Source: PIB)

The Quit India Movement, also known as the August Revolution, was launched by Gandhi in response to the failure of the Cripps Mission, widespread public discontent, and Britain's defeat in Southeast Asia.

- On August 8, at Gowalia Tank in Bombay, Congress passed the Quit India Resolution.
- **Gandhi's Slogan for the Quit India Movement - "Do or Die".**

Directions to Different Sections by Gandhi

- **Government Employees:** Do not resign, but instead pledge loyalty to Congress.
- **Soldiers:** Do not leave the Army, but do not fire on fellow Indians.
- **Students:** If you are confident, stop studying.
- **Peasants:** If zamindars are anti-government, pay mutually agreed-upon rent; otherwise, do not pay rent.
- **Princes:** Please support the masses and recognise your people's sovereignty.
- **People of Princely States:** Support the monarch only if he is anti-government and consider yourselves a member of the Indian nation.

Parallel Activities

- Underground radio by Usha Mehta in Bombay.
- Parallel Governments during the movement.
 - Ballia under Chittu Pandey.
 - Tamluk under Jatiya Sarkar.
 - Satara was named Prati Sarkar by leaders like Y.B. Chavan, Nana Patil, etc.

Peoples Participation

- **Women Participation:** Aruna Asaf Ali, Sucheta Kripalani, and Usha Mehta were among the women who actively engaged.
- **Youth:** Particularly school and college students.
- **Workers:** They went on strikes and were subjected to repression.
- **Peasants:** The movement was led by peasants of various social classes, and they focused on government symbols. Some zamindars also took part.
- **Government Personnel:** They actively took part in the protests, particularly those at lower levels of police and administration.
- **Muslims:** They assisted by providing a haven for underground activists.
- **Communists:** They did not join the movement initially, but in the aftermath of the USSR (where the communists were in control) being attacked by Nazi Germany, the communists began to support the British fight against Germany.
- **Muslim League:** It was opposed to the campaign, thinking that if the British left India at that time, the Hindus would abuse the minorities.

- **Mahasabha and Princely States:** The Hindu Mahasabha voted to boycott the movement, and The Princely states responded quietly.

Government Suppression

- The government carried out mass arrests and lathi charges.
- Fines were imposed on villages.
- Military rules were imposed.

4. Second Phase of Revolutionary Activities (1920s–1930s) (Source: The Indian Express)

Reason

- Emerged primarily due to the sudden suspension of the Non-Cooperation Movement by Mahatma Gandhi in 1922, which disillusioned young nationalists and steered them toward radical armed resistance.

Nature

- The second wave was deeply influenced by the Russian Revolution, shifting its ideology toward secularism, mass social revolution, and Marxist-socialist principles.

Major Revolutionary Centers & Events in Northern Region (Punjab, United Provinces, and Delhi)

- **Hindustan Republican Association (HRA):** Founded in 1924 by Sachindra Nath Sanyal and Ram Prasad Bismil to organize an armed rebellion against colonial rule.
 - **Kakori Robbery (1925):** It took place near Lucknow intending to rob a train to secure funds for weapon procurement, and Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqullah Khan, Roshan Singh, and Rajendra Lahiri were hanged.
- **Hindustan Socialist Republican Association (HSRA):** Formed in 1928 at Feroz Shah Kotla, Delhi, under the leadership of Chandrasekhar Azad and Bhagat Singh, explicitly adding "Socialist" to the group's title to highlight its classless society objective.
 - **Saunders Assassination (1928):** Carried out by Bhagat Singh, Rajguru, and Sukhdev to avenge the brutal death of nationalist leader Lala Lajpat Rai.
 - **Central Legislative Assembly Bombing (1929):** Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt threw non-lethal smoke bombs inside the assembly to protest the repressive Public Safety and Trade Disputes Bills, deliberately surrendering to "make the deaf hear".

Eastern Region (Bengal)

- **Chittagong Armoury Raid (1930):** Led by Surya Sen (Masterda), a large group of revolutionaries captured the government armoury, cut off imperial communication lines, and hoisted the Indian flag to establish a provisional revolutionary government.
- **Active Women Participation:** This phase stood out for the direct participation of women, including Pritilata Waddedar, who led an attack on the Pahartali European Club, and Suniti Chowdhury and Shanti Ghosh, who assassinated a British district magistrate.

5. Mauryan Pillar Architecture (Source: The Indian Express)

- *Pillar inscriptions became significant during the Ashoka period.*
- **Uses of pillars.**
 - As a symbol of the State or to commemorate battle victories.
 - Also used to propagate imperial sermons as well.
- The material used to build the pillars was **chunar sandstone**.
- **Parts of the pillars**
 - The shaft formed the base and was made up of a single piece of stone or monolith.
 - On top of it lay the capital, which was either lotus-shaped or bell-shaped and was influenced by Iranian pillars.
 - Above it, there was a circular or rectangular base known as the abacus on which an animal figure was placed.

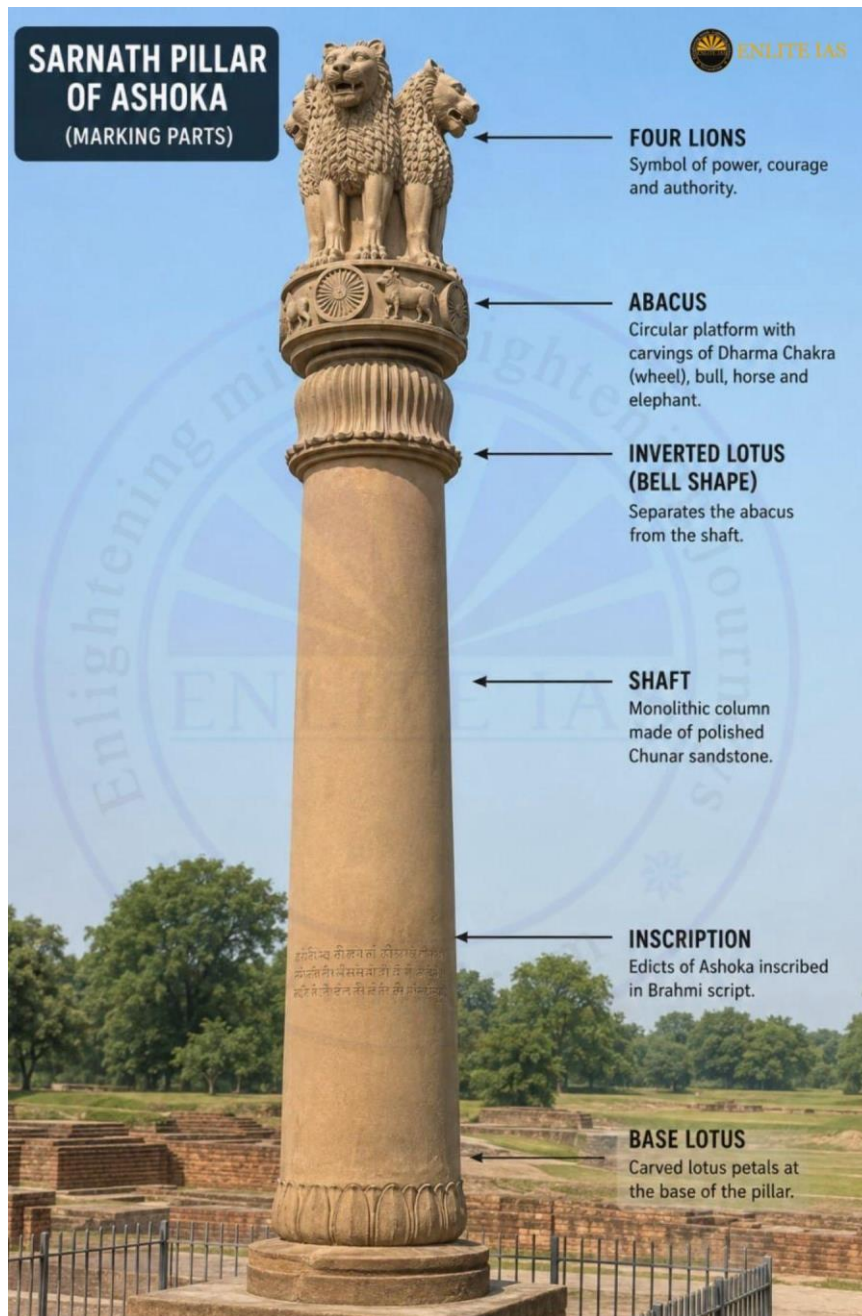
Sarnath Pillar

- The abacus and the animal part of the Sarnath pillar form the official national emblem of India.
- Four animals are shown representing four directions.

Animals	Direction	Representation
Galloping horse	west	The horse named Kanthaka, which Buddha is said to have used for leaving his princely life.
Elephant	east	Elephant depicts the dream of Queen Maya, where a white elephant is seen entering her womb.
Bull	south	Bull depicts the zodiac sign of Taurus, the month in which Buddha was born.

Lion	north	Lion shows the attainment of enlightenment.
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- The four Lions symbolize Buddha spreading Dhamma in all directions.
- It was built in commemoration of the first sermon by Buddha known as Dharmachakrapravartana.



6. Mahabodhi Temple Complex (Source: The Indian Express)

- **Location:** Bodh Gaya in Bihar
- **Cultural Significance**
 - Place where Siddhartha Gautama attained enlightenment.
 - Visited by Chinese traveler Hiuen Tsang in 629 AD.
 - Designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2002.
- **Contribution by Various Dynasties**
 - **Ashokan Origins (3rd Century BCE):** Emperor Ashoka built a shrine and established the Vajrasana (Diamond Throne) to mark the exact spot where Buddha sat.
 - **Gupta Period Construction (5th–6th Century CE):** The core of the present temple structure was built during the late Gupta Empire.
 - **Pala Dynasty Patronage (8th–12th Century CE):** The site flourished under the Pala rulers, who added sculptures, smaller stupas, and votive structures.
- **Later Destruction by Bakhtiyar Khilji**
 - **Restoration (19th Century):** Restored by Sir Alexander Cunningham and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
 - **Architectural Features:** Shikhara, Vajrasana (Diamond Throne), Chaitya niches, amalaka, kalasha, Sculpted balustrades, Buddha images, votive stupas.

POLITY

1. Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) (Source: The Hindu)

- The FCRA was passed in 1976 due to concerns that foreign governments were funding independent organizations to meddle in India's internal affairs.
- *The law aims to control foreign donations to organizations and people to ensure that they operate following the principles of a sovereign democratic republic.*
- FCRA registrations are granted to individuals or associations with definite cultural, economic, educational, religious, and social programs.
- **The FCRA requires every person or NGO seeking to receive foreign donations to be:**
 - Registered under the Act,
 - To open a bank account for the receipt of foreign funds in the State Bank of India, Delhi,
 - To utilize those funds only for the purpose for which they have been received and as stipulated in the Act.
- **Exceptions**
 - Under the FCRA, applicants must be genuine and cannot engage in forced or incentivized religious conversions.
 - They must not have been charged or convicted of inciting communal conflict.
 - The Act also prohibits political parties, public officials, journalists, media organizations, judges, government employees, and politically affiliated groups from accepting foreign donations.
- **Previous Amendments**
 - The FCRA was revised in 2010 to "consolidate the law" on the use of foreign funds and "to prohibit" their use for "any activities detrimental to the national interest."
 - The 2020 amendment strengthened government oversight and control over how foreign donations to NGOs are received and used.
- **FCRA Amendment Rules 2026**
 - NGOs must specify exact objectives and operational areas, with separate fees for each activity category and State/UT.
 - Foreign funds can be used for worship, religious education, heritage preservation, and community kitchens, but cannot be used for religious conversion.
 - Associations having foreign nationals (other than Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs)) as key functionaries will "ordinarily not be considered" for registration or prior permission to receive funds.

- NGOs must utilize at least 75% of previous funds before receiving further installments and spend at least Rs 10 lakh on approved activities over two years for renewal eligibility.
- Mandatory disclosure of the ultimate donor, official websites, social media accounts, and publications to strengthen accountability.

2. Delimitation in India (Source: The Hindu)

- *Delimitation means the act or process of fixing limits or boundaries of territorial constituencies in a country to represent population changes.*
- *The Constitution mandates that the Commission's orders are final and cannot be questioned before any court, and it works on the principle of "One Vote One Value".*

Constitutional Provisions For Delimitation

- **Article 82:** The Parliament enacts a Delimitation Act after every Census.
- **Article 170:** States also get divided into territorial constituencies as per the Delimitation Act after every Census.

Do You Know?

- The first delimitation was carried out in 1950 -51.

Delimitation Commission

- **Formation:** Delimitation Commission Act, 1952.
- **Appointment:** President of India.
- **Composition**
 - Retired Supreme Court Judge
 - Chief Election Commissioner
 - Respective State Election Commissioners
- **Functions**
 - To determine the number and boundaries of constituencies to make the population of all constituencies nearly equal.
 - To identify seats reserved for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, wherever their population is relatively large.

3. Renaming of States in India (Source: The Hindu)

Constitutional Provisions

- *Renaming a state is governed primarily by Article 3 of the Constitution.*
- Parliament can alter the name of an existing state through an ordinary law passed by a simple majority; a constitutional amendment under Article 368 is not required

Procedure to Rename the States

- **Initiation of Proposal:** A proposal may originate from the State Legislature or the Union Government.
- **Union Government Examination:** The proposal is examined by the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- **President's Recommendation:** A Bill dealing with the alteration of the name of a state can be introduced in either House of Parliament only on the recommendation of the President.
- **Reference to State Legislature:** Before recommending the Bill, the President refers it to the concerned State Legislature for expressing its views within a specified period.
- **Advisory Nature of State's Opinion:** The State Legislature's views are not binding on Parliament. Parliament may accept, modify or reject them. It may also proceed if the State Legislature fails to respond within the prescribed period.
- **Parliamentary Passage:** The Bill is passed by both Houses of Parliament by a simple majority.
- **Presidential Assent:** After receiving the President's assent, the Bill becomes an Act.
- **Official Implementation:** The new name is notified and the relevant constitutional schedules and official records are amended.

Examples

- Uttarakhand was renamed Uttaranchal with effect from 1 January 2007, while Orissa was renamed Odisha in 2011.

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

1. Pax Silica Initiative (Source: The Hindu)

Pax Silica is a US-led strategic initiative to build a secure, prosperous, and innovation-driven silicon supply chain from critical minerals.

- **Objective:** To reduce coercive dependencies, protect the materials and capabilities foundational to artificial intelligence, and ensure aligned nations can develop and deploy transformative technologies at scale.
- **Countries:** US, Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Netherlands, United Kingdom, Israel, UAE, Australia, Qatar.

2. World Health Organization (WHO) (Source: The Hindu)

WHO is the United Nations' specialized agency for Health was founded in 1948.

Objectives

- WHO acts as the directing and coordinating authority on international health work.
- It helps countries with disease control, technical assistance, emergency response, health standards, and health system strengthening.
- It also frames international health regulations and recommendations.

Headquarters

- Geneva, Switzerland.

Members

- There are 194 Member States, 150 country offices, and six regional offices.

3. International Criminal Court (ICC) (Source: The Hindu)

- **What is it?:** The International Criminal Court (ICC) is an intergovernmental organisation and international tribunal.
- **Formation**
 - It is the first international criminal court that is permanently established.
 - The Rome Statute, which served as its foundation document, became effective on July 1, 2002.
- **Headquartered:** The Hague, Netherlands
- **What they do?:** It looks into and prosecutes those accused of heinous offences such as genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes, and acts of aggression.
- **Status of India:** India is not a member.

ECONOMY

1. Foreign Exchange Reserves (Forex Reserves) (Source: The Hindu)

Forex reserves are assets held on reserve by a central bank (RBI) in foreign currencies like dollar, which can include bonds, treasury bills and other government securities.

Need To Know

- They are an important component of the **Balance of Payment (BoP)**
- **Components of India's Forex Reserves**
 - Foreign Currency Assets (FCA) (largest contributor)
 - Gold reserves (second largest contributor)
 - **Special Drawing Rights:** It is not a currency, but its value is determined by a basket of 5 major currencies: the US dollar, euro, Chinese renminbi, Japanese yen, and British pound sterling.
 - **Reserve Tranche Position (RTP) with the IMF:** RTP is a country's quota-based access to IMF resources, available for borrowing without strict conditions, used for BoPs or financial stability.

How much forex reserve does India have?

- **Foreign Currency Assets:** about US\$564.68 billion
- **Gold Reserves:** about US\$104.74 billion
- **Special Drawing Rights (SDRs):** approximately US\$18.65 billion
- **Reserve position with the IMF:** approximately US\$4.80 billion

2. Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs) (Source: The Hindu)

Urban Cooperative Banks (UCBs) are primary cooperative banks located mainly in urban and semi-urban areas.

Features

- They provide credit and banking services to small traders, salaried persons, professionals, MSMEs and other local borrowers.
- Registered under the relevant State Cooperative Societies Act or the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002.
- Operate on cooperative principles such as mutual help, democratic decision-making and open membership.
- Provide banking services—deposits, loans, payments and other facilities—similar to commercial banks.

- Traditionally focused on small borrowers and middle- and lower-income groups.
- Their banking functions are regulated and supervised by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) under the Banking Regulation Act, 1949

Four-Tier Regulation by RBI

Tier	Deposit Size
Tier 1	Up to ₹100 crore
Tier 2	Above ₹100 crore and up to ₹1,000 crore
Tier 3	Above ₹1,000 crore and up to ₹10,000 crore
Tier 4	Above ₹10,000 crore

3. Current Account Deficit (CAD) (Source: The Hindu)

A current account deficit occurs when a country's total payments to the rest of the world exceed its total receipts from the rest of the world on the current account.

- It is an important component of the **Balance of Payments (BoP)**

Formula

Current Account Balance = Trade Balance + Net Services + Net Primary Income + Net Transfers

- **Trade Balance:** Exports and imports of merchandise.
- **Net Services:** Software services, tourism, shipping, banking, insurance, etc.
- **Net Primary Income:** Interest, dividends and profits received from or paid to foreign countries.
- **Net Transfers:** Remittances, gifts and foreign aid.

Causes of CAD

- **Domestic Causes**
 - Rapid economic growth increases imports of capital goods, energy and raw materials.
 - Low export competitiveness.
 - High dependence on imported crude oil and gold.
 - Weak manufacturing and limited value addition.
 - Appreciation of the domestic currency can make exports relatively expensive.
 - Excessive domestic demand and consumption.

- **External Causes**

- Rise in global crude-oil prices.
- Global slowdown reducing demand for exports.
- Supply-chain disruptions.
- Depreciation of the domestic currency increasing the import bill.
- Higher interest and dividend payments to foreign investors.

Effects of a High CAD

- **Pressure on the Currency:** Demand for foreign currency rises, causing depreciation of the rupee.
- **Imported Inflation:** Imported fuel, fertilisers and raw materials become costlier.
- **External Vulnerability:** The country becomes dependent on foreign capital to finance the deficit.
- **Higher External Debt:** Borrowing may increase if stable capital inflows are insufficient.
- **Reduced Investor Confidence:** A persistent and large CAD may make investors concerned about external stability.
- **Pressure on Foreign-Exchange Reserves:** The central bank may need to use reserves to manage excessive currency volatility.

ENVIRONMENT

1. Panna Tiger Reserve (Source: The Indian Express)

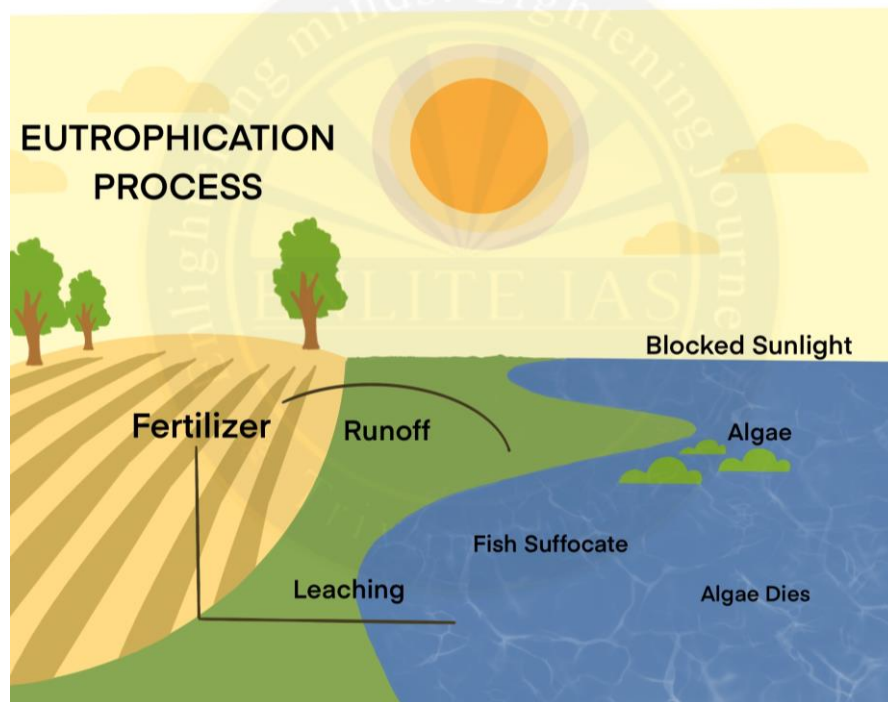
- **Location:** It lies in the Vindhyan Range, Madhya Pradesh.
- **Formation:** Panna National Park was established in 1981. It was declared a Tiger Reserve in 1994.
- **Geography of the Region**
 - The only Tiger Reserve in the entire Bundelkhand region.
 - It is characterized by a 'Table Top' topography.
- **River:** Ken River
- **Vegetation:** Dominated by dry deciduous forests interspersed with grasslands.
- **Fauna:** The reserve is home to a significant population of tigers, sloth bears, leopards, and striped hyenas.
- **Fact:** Panna is the 22nd Tiger Reserve in India and the 5th in Madhya Pradesh.



2. Eutrophication (Source: Down To Earth)

Eutrophication is the enrichment of a water body with excess nutrients, mainly nitrogen and phosphorus, which causes algal blooms and then reduces dissolved oxygen as the algae decompose.

- **Main Causes:** Fertilizer runoff, sewage, detergents, and other nutrient-rich wastes.
- **Effects:** High Biological Oxygen Demand, low dissolved oxygen, loss of aquatic biodiversity, and sometimes toxic blooms.



3. Asiatic Lions (Source: The Hindu)

- *Gir National Park and Wildlife Sanctuary (dry deciduous forests) is the only abode of the Asiatic lion.*
- **Protection Status**
 - **IUCN Red List:** Endangered
 - **CITES:** Appendix I
 - **Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972:** Schedule I
- **Associated Tribe:** Gir is often linked with "**Maldharis**" (pastoral communities in the region), who have survived through the ages by having a symbiotic relationship with the lion.

Project Lion

- **Aim:** It envisages landscape ecology-based conservation of the Asiatic Lion in Gujarat by integrating conservation and eco-development.

4. Clouded Leopard (Source: The Hindu)

- **Name:** Named after the cloud-shaped pattern on its skin.
- **Fact:** It is the State animal of Meghalaya.
- **Habitat:** Clouded leopard is a wild cat found in the foothills of the Himalayas.
- **Distribution in Asia:** Southeast Asia, China, India
- **Distribution in India:** Sikkim, northern West Bengal, Meghalaya subtropical forests, Tripura, Mizoram, Manipur, Assam, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh.
- **Conservation Efforts**
 - **IUCN:** Vulnerable
 - **Wildlife Protection Act:** Schedule I
 - **CITES:** Appendix I
 - **Other:** It has been added to India's Recovery Programme for Critically Endangered Species
- **Threats:** Deforestation, changing rainfall patterns, Human-animal conflict, Development projects

5. Nilgiri Tahr (Source: The Hindu)

Nilgiri Tahr is also known as the Nilgiri Ibex, and it is the state animal of Tamil Nadu.

Habitat

- It is found in the **open montane grassland habitat** of the rainforest ecoregion.
- *It is endemic to the Nilgiri Hills and the southern portion of the Western Ghats in Tamil Nadu and Kerala.*
- **Key Habitat is Eravikulam National Park (Kerala)**

Protection Status

- **IUCN Status:** Endangered
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** Schedule 1

Threats

- Habitat loss (mainly from domestic livestock and spread of invasive plants)
- Poaching,
- Populations of these animals are small and isolated, making them vulnerable to local extinction,
- Climate Change

6. Black-necked Crane (Source: Down To Earth)

The Black-necked Crane (Grus nigricollis) is a high-altitude migratory bird species.

- It is the only alpine crane species in the world

Habitat

- Breeds in high-altitude wetlands, alpine meadows, and marshes across the Tibetan Plateau, Ladakh (Changthang region, Tso Moriri, Tso Kar, Pangong Tso), and northern Sikkim.
- Winters in lower elevations including parts of Arunachal Pradesh (Sangti Valley in West Kameng district, Tawang) and Bhutan, as well as southern China.

Threats

- Loss of wetlands.
- Stray dogs.
- Unregulated tourism
- Infrastructure development

Protection Status:

- **IUCN Red List:** Near Threatened
- **CITES:** Appendix I
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972:** Schedule I

Cultural Significance

- The bird is revered by the community of Monpas (a major Buddhist ethnic group of Arunachal Pradesh) as an embodiment of the sixth Dalai Lama (Tsangyang Gyatso).

7. Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) (Source: The Hindu)

Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM) is a key component of the European Union's (EU) European Green Deal, aimed at preventing "carbon leakage" and ensuring fair competition between EU industries and foreign producers subject to different climate regulations.

Sectors Covered under CBAM

- Cover high-emission sectors like cement, iron and steel, aluminium, fertilisers, electricity, and hydrogen.

Concerns for India

- **Impact on Exports:** Carbon-intensive Indian exports may become less competitive in the European market.
- **Small and Medium Enterprises:** Smaller firms may face difficulty in measuring, verifying and reporting product-level emissions.
- **Administrative Burden:** Indian exporters need reliable systems for carbon accounting, emissions verification and documentation.
- **Developmental Concerns:** Developing countries argue that they should not face the same obligations as historically high-emitting developed economies.
- **Question of Carbon Sovereignty:** India may lose revenue if carbon-related charges are collected by the EU rather than through an Indian carbon-pricing system.
- **Risk of Protectionism:** India argues that environmental objectives could be used as a justification for protecting European industries.

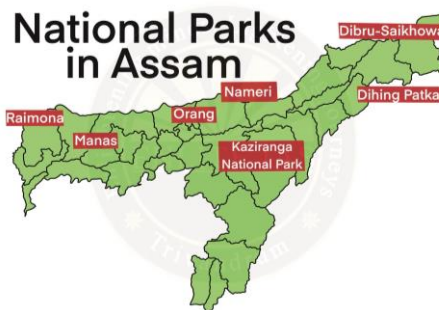
8. Amazon Rainforest (Source: The Hindu)

- Lies in the Amazon River Basin (the world's largest river by discharge volume)
- Countries with Amazon Rainforests are 60% of it is in Brazil, 13% is in Peru, 8% in Bolivia, 7% and 6% respectively in Colombia and Venezuela, and nearly 3% each in Guyana and Suriname, and around 1% in French Guiana and Ecuador.
- The Amazon rainforest, or Amazonia, covers close to 1.3% of the planet's surface and 4.1% of the Earth's land area, but as a biome, the Amazon is home to 10% of the world's wildlife species.



9. Kaziranga National Park (Source: The Hindu)

- **Location:** Located between the Brahmaputra River and the Mikir Hills in Assam.
- **Status:** National Park, Tiger Reserve, Important Bird Area, and UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- **Famous For:** Largest population of Indian one-horned rhinoceros.
- **Biodiversity:** Home to tigers, elephants, swamp deer, wild buffalo.
- **Vegetation:** It is a mix of eastern wet alluvial grasslands, semi evergreen forests and tropical moist deciduous forests.



10. Bharat Stage Emission Norms (Source: The Hindu)

Bharat Stage (BS) emission norms are India's legally enforceable standards to limit air pollutants from motor vehicles, framed under the Motor Vehicles Act and aligned with European (Euro) norms.

- Bharat Stage Emission Standards (BSES) regulate tailpipe emissions of carbon monoxide (CO), hydrocarbons (HC), nitrogen oxides (NOx), particulate matter (PM), and, in later stages, particulate number (PN).
- They apply to compression-ignition (diesel) and spark-ignition (petrol/CNG) engines in two-wheelers, three-wheelers, cars, buses, trucks, and non-road equipment.
- The standards are notified by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and implemented through the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)

Evolution of Bharat Stage Emission Norms

- **BS-I Norms**
 - **When:** Introduced nationwide in 2000 (also called India 2000, aligned with Euro I).
 - **What it did:** Set India's first pan-India limits on tailpipe pollutants—mainly CO, HC, NOx, and PM—for petrol and diesel vehicles.
- **BS-II Norms**

- **When:** 2001 in metro cities; expanded to more cities by 2003; nationwide by 2005.
- **Key Changes vs BS-I:** Tighter limits on CO, HC, NO_x, and PM; better engine calibration and fuel quality push.
- **BS-III Norms**
 - **When:** 2005 in metros/major cities; nationwide by 2010.
 - **Key Changes:** Further reduction in NO_x and PM; greater emphasis on on-board diagnostics (OBD) beginnings and better combustion control.
- **BS-IV Norms**
 - **When:** 2010 in metros/major cities; nationwide from April 2017.
 - **Key Changes:** Significant cut in NO_x and PM, especially for diesel; stronger OBD requirements; push for cleaner fuels (sulfur reduction).
- **BS-V Norms**
 - **Status:** Skipped by policy decision; India moved directly from BS-IV to BS-VI.
- **BS-VI Norms**
 - **When:** 2018 in Delhi; 2019 in NCR; nationwide from 1 April 2020.
 - **Fuel Change:** Sulfur in petrol/diesel cut from 50 ppm (BS-IV) to 10 ppm (BS-VI), enabling advanced after-treatment.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. Leptospirosis (Source: The Hindu)

Leptospirosis is a bacterial zoonotic disease caused by Leptospira.

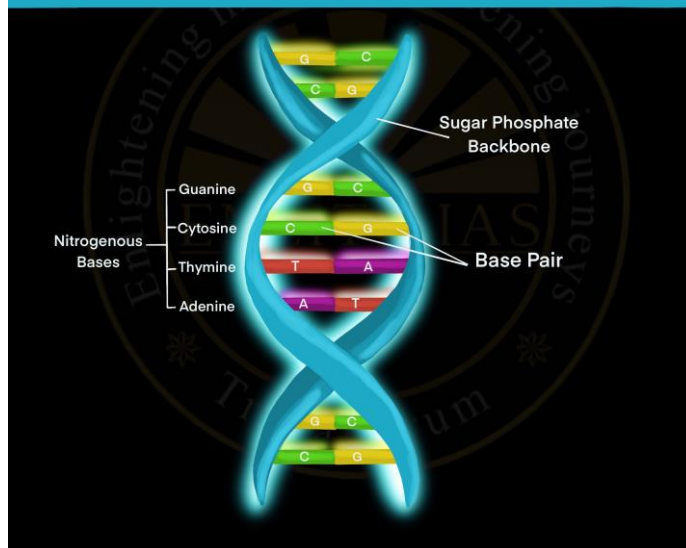
- **Transmission:** Contact with contaminated water, soil, or animal urine; enters through cuts, abrasions, or mucous membranes.
- **Reservoirs:** Rodents, cattle, pigs, dogs, and other wild or domestic animals
- **Symptoms:** Fever, headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhoea; severe cases can cause kidney, liver, lung, or brain involvement.
- **Treatment:** It is treated with antibiotics, such as penicillin G, doxycycline, and ceftriaxone.

2. DNA vs RNA (Source: Down To Earth)

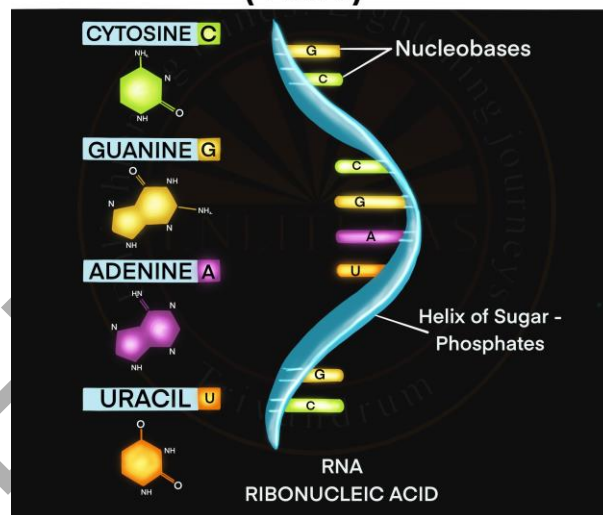
Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA)	Ribonucleic Acid (RNA)
------------------------------------	-------------------------------

• DNA is an organic chemical that contains genetic information and instructions for protein synthesis. • DNA is a key part of reproduction in which genetic heredity is passed down through DNA from parents to offspring	• RNA is a nucleic acid principally involved in the synthesis of proteins, carrying the messenger (ex: mRNA) instructions from DNA, which itself contains the genetic instructions
• It has a deoxyribose and phosphate backbone having four distinct bases: Adenine, Cytosine, Guanine & Thymine (ACGT).	• It has a ribose and phosphate backbone with four bases: Adenine, Cytosine, Guanine & Uracil (ACGU).
• Found in the cell nucleus and Mitochondria.	• Found in the Cytoplasm, nucleus, and ribosomes.
• Has 2-deoxyribose.	• Has Ribose
• A double-stranded molecule with a long chain of nucleotides.	• A single-stranded molecule with a shorter chain of nucleotides.
• Self-replicating	• Synthesizes from DNA when required.

DNA STRUCTURE



RIBONUCLEIC ACID (RNA)



mRNA

- mRNA stands for messenger ribonucleic acid.
- It is usually a single-stranded RNA molecule that carries genetic instructions copied from DNA to ribosomes, where proteins are synthesized.

3. Internet Throttling (Source: The Hindu)

Internet throttling is the deliberate slowing of an internet connection by an Internet Service Provider (ISP), mobile operator, or sometimes a network administrator.

- The connection usually remains active, but websites, videos, downloads, or online games work more slowly.

Why does it happen?

- **Network Congestion:** Speeds are reduced during busy periods so that more users can share available bandwidth.
- **Data-limit Policies:** Some plans reduce speed after a user crosses a monthly data threshold.
- **Traffic Management:** Certain high-bandwidth activities, such as video streaming, torrenting, or gaming, may be given lower priority.
- **Plan-based Prioritisation:** Users on lower-tier plans may receive reduced priority when the network is busy.
- **Government or Institutional Control:** In some situations, authorities or organisations may intentionally restrict internet performance or access.

4. Notifiable Disease (Source: The Hindu)

- **What is it?:** Diseases are legally required to be reported to government authorities for monitoring and preventing outbreaks.
- **Power to Declare Notifiable Disease:** Lies with the Centre and State Government under the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, and other public health laws.
- **Common Notifiable Diseases in India:**
 - **Infectious Diseases:** Tuberculosis (TB), HIV/AIDS, Cholera, Malaria, Plague, Dengue, COVID-19.
 - **Non-communicable Diseases:** Cancer (some states), mental health disorders (increasing inclusion).
 - **Others:** Japanese Encephalitis, Measles, Rabies, H1N1, and Leprosy.

5. Gaganyaan Mission (Source: The Hindu)

Gaganyaan Mission is the manned space mission of India.

Fact To Know

- The crewed spaceflight plans to place humans to Low Earth Orbit (LEO) in the initial missions.

- Will help India in gaining practical knowledge and experience in launching future space exploration missions.
- The first uncrewed mission with a robot called Vyom-Mitra will help in assessing the preparedness of ISRO in manned missions.

Manned Space Exploration Across the World

- Project Apollo of the USA- Moon
- Artemis Programme of the USA- Moon
- Tiangong space station of China

6. Shigellosis (Source: The Hindu)

Shigellosis is an acute, highly contagious bacterial infection of the intestine caused by Shigella.

- **Transmission:** Faeco-oral route through contaminated food, water, hands, surfaces, or direct person-to-person contact.
- **Incubation Period:** Usually 1–4 days.
- **High-risk Groups:** Children below five years, malnourished persons, elderly people and immunocompromised individuals.
- **Disease Type:** Food- and water-borne communicable disease.
- **Symptoms:** Diarrhoea, fever, abdominal cramps, nausea or vomiting and dehydration
- **Diagnosis:** Stool culture or molecular testing, along with clinical assessment.
- **Vaccine:** No widely available routine vaccine is currently used for shigellosis.
- **Prevention**
 - Safe drinking water and proper sanitation.
 - Handwashing with soap after defecation and before preparing or eating food.
 - Hygienic food handling and thorough cooking.
 - Safe disposal of faeces and proper care of infected children.

7. Ebola (Source: The Hindu)

- **Origin of Name:** The virus is named after the Ebola river (Republic of Congo) first outbreak in 1976.
- **Cause:** Ebola virus

- **Symptoms:**
 - **Early:** Fever, headache, muscle pain, sore throat.
 - **Advanced:** Vomiting, diarrhea, rash, organ failure, and internal/external bleeding.
 - **Incubation period:** 2-21 days.
- **Diagnosis:** Blood tests (PCR, ELISA) and differential diagnosis to rule out similar diseases.
- **Treatment:**
 - Supportive care (rehydration, symptom management).
 - Monoclonal antibodies (e.g., Inmazeb, Ebanga) and experimental antivirals.
- **Prevention:**
 - Vaccination with Ervebo.
 - Use of PPE, safe burial practices, and public health awareness.

SCHEMES

1. Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan (Source: The Indian Express)

The Adi Karmayogi Abhiyan is a national mission launched by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs to strengthen responsive governance and empower grassroots tribal leadership across India.

- Formally launched in September 2025, it is designed as the world's largest tribal grassroots leadership initiative.

Funding

- Central Sector scheme

Fact

- Launched as part of Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh and aligned with the Viksit Bharat @2047 vision.
- Guiding ethos: Sewa (Service), Sankalp (Resolve), Samarpan (Dedication), in line with “Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Prayas, Sabka Vishwas”.

Objectives

- Institutionalise tribal grassroots leadership and create a structured cadre of local functionaries.
- Strengthen responsive, culturally rooted, problem-solving governance in tribal areas.
- Improve convergence and implementation of major tribal schemes at village level (e.g., PM-JANMAN, Dharti Aaba, Sickle Cell Mission).
- Promote bottom-up planning through Tribal Village Action Plans and local monitoring.

2. Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) Scheme (Source: The Indian Express)

Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRS) is a flagship Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs that provides quality residential education to Scheduled Tribe (ST) students, especially those living in remote and tribal-dominated areas.

- The scheme covers students from Class VI to XII and is broadly aligned with CBSE standards.
- Implemented National Education Society for Tribal Students (NESTS)

Objectives

- To provide quality education to ST children in remote areas.
- To bridge the educational gap between tribal and non-tribal populations.
- To improve access to secondary and senior-secondary education.
- To promote all-round development through sports, skill development, physical education and extracurricular activities.
- To prepare students for higher education and competitive examinations such as engineering and medical entrance examinations.
- To preserve tribal identity, culture, local knowledge and environmental traditions.

3. National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) (Source: The Hindu)

Namami Gange Programme is a Central Sector Scheme implemented by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) with World Bank assistance, aimed at

rejuvenating and conserving the Ganga River through pollution abatement, ecological restoration, and sustainable community participation.

- Ministry: Ministry of Jal Shakti
- It is being implemented by the National Council for Rejuvenation, Protection and Management of River Ganga also known as the National Ganga Council.
- This mission was established on 12th August 2011 under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 as a registered society.

Objective

- The mission incorporates rehabilitating and boosting the existing STPs (Sewage Treatment Plants) and instant short-term steps to curb pollution at exit points on the riverfront in order to check the inflow of sewage.
- To maintain the continuity of the water flow without changing the natural season variations.
- To restore and maintain the surface flow and groundwater.
- To regenerate and maintain the natural vegetation of the area.
- To conserve and regenerate the aquatic biodiversity as well as the riparian biodiversity of the river Ganga basin.
- To allow participation of the public in the process of protection, rejuvenation and management of the river.

4. Green India Mission (Source: The Hindu)

Also called the National Mission for a Green India, is one of the eight missions under India's National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).

- Launched in 2014
- It is a centrally sponsored scheme
- Implemented by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC).

Aim

- It seeks to protect, restore, and enhance India's forest and tree cover while helping the country respond to climate change through adaptation and mitigation measures

Objectives

- Increase forest/tree cover on 5 million hectares (mha) of forest and non-forest lands.
- Improve quality of forest cover on another 5 mha (total 10 mha treated).
- Enhance ecosystem services: biodiversity, hydrological services, soil conservation, and carbon sequestration.
- Raise forest-based livelihood income for about 3 million households living in and around forests.

- Boost annual CO₂ sequestration by 50–60 million tonnes (initial 2020 target; later revised with larger 2030 goals).

Ecological Focus

- Forest and tree cover expansion on degraded and non-forest lands.
- Ecological restoration of degraded forests, grasslands, wetlands, mangroves, shifting cultivation areas, scrublands, ravines, cold deserts, and abandoned mining areas.
- Special attention to ecologically critical regions like the Aravallis and Western Ghats.

5. National Action for Mechanised Sanitation Ecosystem (NAMASTE) Scheme (Source: The Hindu)

*NAMASTE scheme is a **Central Sector Scheme** launched by the Government of India to eliminate hazardous manual scavenging and ensure the safety, dignity, and social security of sanitation workers, especially those cleaning sewers and septic tanks.*

Launch

- Launched in 2022 (approved in Union Budget 2022–23) as a joint initiative of the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment (MoSJE) – nodal ministry and Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)

Objectives

- Achieve zero fatalities in sanitation work in India.
- Ensure no direct contact of sanitation workers with human faecal matter.
- Promote 100% mechanised cleaning of sewers and septic tanks.
- Provide alternative sustainable livelihoods and entrepreneurship opportunities to sanitation workers.
- Strengthen occupational safety, skill development, and social security for sanitation workers.

Implementation

- Implementing agency: National Safai Karmacharis Finance Development Corporation (NSKFDC) under MoSJE.
- Implementation area: Initially targeted at 500 cities notified under the AMRUT scheme; process underway to extend to all Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).
- Duration & outlay: Approved for four years: 2022–23 to 2025–26

PLACES IN NEWS

1. Liberia (Source: The Indian Express)

- **Location:** Liberia is a country on the West African coast.
- **Capital:** Monrovia
- **Border Countries:** Sierra Leone, Guinea, Ivory Coast.
- **Border Waterbodies:** Atlantic Ocean.
- **Climate:** Equatorial Climate
- **Associated Grouping:** African Union (AU), and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)



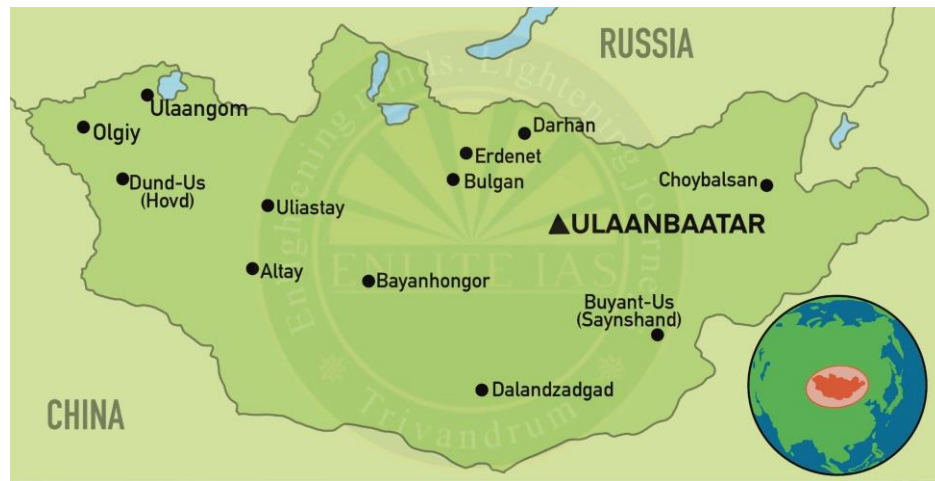
2. Kuril Island (Source: The Hindu)

- Kuril Islands are a disputed territory between Japan and Russia.
- The Kuril Islands are a volcanic archipelago administered as part of the Sakhalin Oblast in the Russian Far East.
- The islands stretch approximately 1,300 km northeast from Hokkaido in Japan to the Kamchatka Peninsula in Russia, separating the Sea of Okhotsk from the North Pacific Ocean.



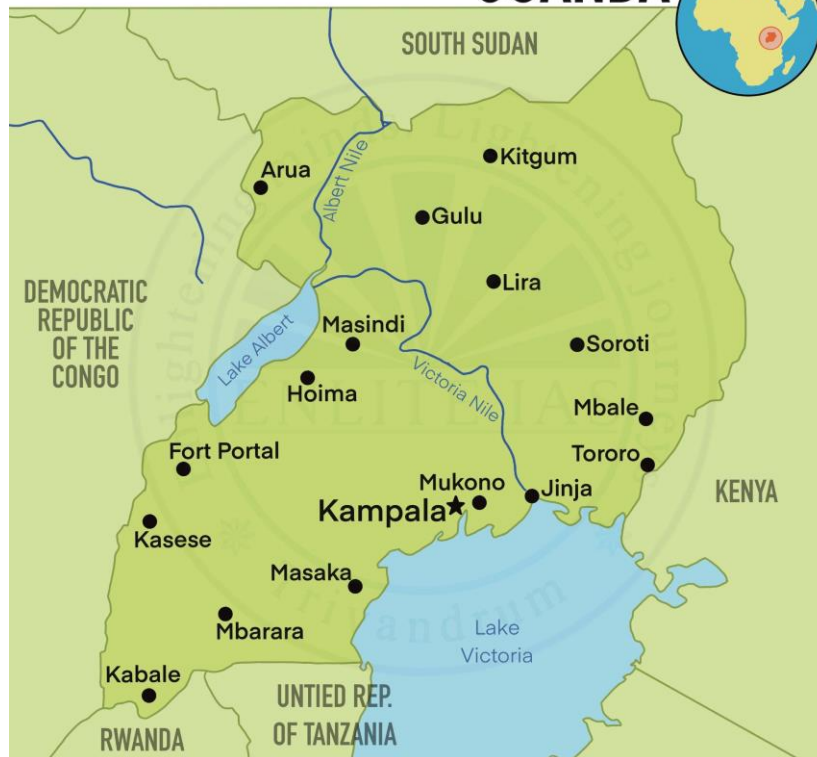
3. Mongolia (Source: PIB)

- **Location:** It is a landlocked country in East Asia.
- **Capital:** Ulaanbaatar
- **Border Countries:** China and Russia
- **Geography**
 - **Grasslands:** Mongolian-Manchurian grassland
 - **Desert:** Gobi Desert
- **Population:** It is the world's most sparsely populated sovereign state.
- **Culture:** Tibetan Buddhism



4. Uganda (Source: The Hindu)

- **Location:** Uganda is a landlocked country in East Africa.
- **Capital:** Kampala
- **Border Countries:** Kenya, South Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania.
- **Bordering Waterbodies:** Lake Victoria
- **Geography:** Uganda lies within the Nile basin and has equatorial climate.
- **Associated International Grouping:** African Union, NAM, Organization of Islamic Cooperation.
- **Recent Development**
 - 19th Summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) to be held in Kampala, Uganda in 2024.
 - Declared Ebola free by WHO.



5. Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan (Source: The Indian Express)

Uzbekistan

- **Location:** Uzbekistan is a doubly landlocked country located in Central Asia.
- **Capital:** Tashkent
- **Border Countries:** Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Turkmenistan.
- **Bordering Waterbodies:** Aral Sea
- **Geography:** Part of Eurasian Steppe or Great Steppe.
- **Climatic Type:** Continental Climate
- **Major International Groupings:** Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and hosts the SCO's Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) in Tashkent.



Kyrgyzstan

- **Location:** It is a landlocked country in Central Asia lying in the Tian Shan and Pamir mountain ranges.
- **Capital:** Bishkek
- **Border Countries:** Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and China.
- **International Cooperation:** Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU), and Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO).

