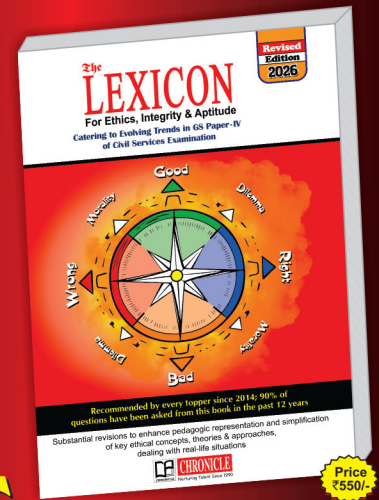


Civil Services

CHRONICLE

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4 GENERAL STUDIES Mock Tests

- ➔ Based on Analysis of Previous Years' Question Papers
- ➔ Meticulously Framed
- ➔ Interdisciplinary and Multidisciplinary Questions



ARTICLES

- Deep Tech Startups and India's Development Paradigm
- Women-led Decentralised Renewable Energy: Catalysing India's Last-Mile Energy Transition
- M.A.N.A.V. Vision: Leveraging AI for Human-Centric Governance
- India Semiconductor Mission 2.0: Strengthening India's Chip Ecosystem
- New Delhi Declaration on AI Impact: India's Roadmap for AI's Future
- National Security and Public Order vs Freedom of Art and Expression
- From Energy Dependence to Economic Interdependence: Reframing India-Arab Trade Relations
- Menstrual Health: A Facet of Right to Life
- PRAHAAR: Shaping a New Era of Proactive Counter-Terrorism
- Ethanol Blending: Rising Tensions between Aatmanirbharta in Energy and Aatmanirbharta in Food
- Report of the 16th Finance Commission: Recommendations and Emerging Concerns
- Decarbonising the Steel Sector: An Economic Necessity & Environmental Obligation for India
- Chemical Parks to Power India's Manufacturing and Sustainability Push

India's Rising NCD Burden
Need for A Preventive & Resilient Health Ecosystem

UPSC CSE PRELIMS 2026

4 GENERAL STUDIES MOCK TESTS

79

- In this Special Section, we have come up with four Mock Tests on General Studies along with answers and explanations, exclusively for the upcoming UPSC Civil Services Preliminary Exam 2026.
- The MCQs have been meticulously framed by our team of experts after a detailed analysis of the past three years' GS question papers of UPSC CSE Prelims.
- The four Mock Tests are primarily intended to serve as a quick practice and revision resource. The MCQs presented herein will help you revise & strengthen your preparation, and arm you with the necessary competitive edge.
- We wish you all the best!

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India's Rising NCD Burden

Need for A Preventive and Resilient Health Ecosystem

India stands at a critical juncture in its public health trajectory as non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as cardiovascular ailments, diabetes, cancers, and chronic respiratory disorders increasingly dominate the disease burden. Rapid urbanisation, changing lifestyles, environmental risks, and an ageing population are accelerating this shift. Tackling NCDs requires a decisive shift towards prevention-oriented and resilient health systems.

■ **Alok Singh**

Non-communicable diseases (NCDs) have emerged as one of the most significant public health challenges of the 21st century. Globally, health systems are facing an unprecedented rise in chronic illnesses such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, cancers and chronic respiratory diseases. According to recent global health assessments, NCDs account for nearly 75% of deaths worldwide, placing immense pressure on healthcare systems and economic resources.

In this context, the World Economic Forum (WEF) recently released a report, titled *Acting Early on Non-Communicable Diseases: A Framework for Health System Transformation*. The report highlights that most health systems remain reactive, focusing on expensive treatment at later stages rather than preventing disease onset. It emphasizes that addressing NCDs requires tackling underlying risk factors such as unhealthy lifestyles, environmental conditions, and socio-economic inequalities. It argues that sustainable health systems must prioritize early detection, preventive healthcare, and cross-sector collaboration.

For India, which is undergoing rapid demographic and lifestyle transitions, the rising NCD burden represents both a public health crisis and a developmental challenge. Addressing it requires a systemic transformation towards a preventive and resilient health ecosystem.

The Growing NCD Burden in India: Magnitude and Patterns

- ◆ **The Shift:** India has witnessed a dramatic shift in its disease profile over the past three decades. While communicable diseases once dominated the health landscape, non-communicable diseases now account for over (60%-65%) of total deaths in the country.
- ◆ **Major Diseases:** Cardiovascular diseases remain the leading cause of mortality, followed by cancers, chronic respiratory diseases, and diabetes.
- ◆ India is often referred to as the “diabetes capital of the world,” with over 100 million individuals living with diabetes.

- ◆ Similarly, hypertension affects nearly one in four adults, increasing the risk of heart disease and stroke.

Worrying Trends

Several worrying trends characterize India's NCD burden:

- ◆ **Early Onset of Diseases:** Indians tend to develop conditions like heart disease and diabetes almost a decade earlier than populations in Western countries.
- ◆ **Urban-rural Spread:** While NCDs were once considered urban diseases, they are now rapidly increasing in rural areas as well.

Rising NCD Burden: Key Drivers

The growing NCD crisis in India is driven by a combination of lifestyle, environmental, demographic, and socio-economic factors.

- ◆ **Lifestyle Changes and Urbanization:** Rapid urbanization has significantly altered dietary habits and physical activity patterns.
- ◆ Increased consumption of processed foods, high sugar intake, and sedentary lifestyles have contributed to obesity, hypertension, and diabetes.
- ◆ **Tobacco and Alcohol Consumption:** India is among the largest consumers of tobacco products globally. Both smoking and smokeless tobacco significantly increase the risk of cancers, cardiovascular diseases, and respiratory illnesses.
- ◆ **Environmental Pollution:** Air pollution has become a major risk factor for NCDs. Exposure to polluted air increases the likelihood of chronic respiratory diseases, cardiovascular complications, and even neurological disorders.
- ◆ **Ageing Population:** Older populations are more susceptible to chronic diseases, thereby increasing the overall burden of NCDs.
- ◆ **Social Determinants of Health:** Income inequality, education levels, and access to healthcare also influence disease outcomes.
- ◆ Marginalised communities often face higher exposure to risk factors while having limited access to early diagnosis and treatment.

Deep Tech Startups and India's Development Paradigm: From Technological Dependence to Innovation-Led Self-Reliance

India's startup ecosystem has traditionally been dominated by fintech, software as a service (SaaS), and consumer internet platforms. However, global supply chain disruptions, geopolitical tensions, and technological concentration in a few countries have exposed structural vulnerabilities.

The recent revision in India's deep-tech startup classification, extending eligibility to 20 years and increasing the turnover cap to Rs.300 crore, signals a structural policy shift. This reflects a broader development paradigm; moving from technology consumption to innovation-led self-reliance.

What is Deep Tech?

- Deep technology (Deep Tech) refers to ventures built on fundamental scientific research or advanced engineering breakthroughs.
- **It is characterized by:**
 - ✓ Long R&D cycles
 - ✓ High capital intensity
 - ✓ Strong intellectual property (IP) focus
 - ✓ Complex regulatory and validation processes
- Unlike app-based or platform startups, deep tech is rooted in core technological innovation rather than business model innovation.

What are Deep Tech Startups?

- Deep tech startups commercialise cutting-edge technologies emerging from research labs and advanced engineering ecosystems.
- They typically:
 - ✓ Spend 5-10 years in research before significant revenue generation.
 - ✓ Require patient capital rather than quick-return venture funding.
 - ✓ Operate in high-risk, high-reward environments.
- These startups build defensible IP and technological capabilities that strengthen national competitiveness.

Key Sectors in India's Deep Tech Ecosystem

- **Semiconductors and Electronics**
 - ✓ Chip design and fabrication
 - ✓ Embedded systems and advanced hardware
 - ✓ Reducing import dependence in critical components
- **Biotechnology and Medical Devices**
 - ✓ Vaccine platforms and biologics

- ✓ Affordable diagnostic technologies
- ✓ Indigenous medical device manufacturing
- **Artificial Intelligence and Advanced Computing**
 - ✓ AI infrastructure and large-scale models
 - ✓ Robotics and autonomous systems
- **Energy and Climate Technologies**
 - ✓ Green hydrogen
 - ✓ Advanced battery storage
- **Space and Defence Technologies**
 - ✓ Launch systems and satellite technologies
 - ✓ Aerospace engineering

How Deep Tech Startups are Driving Innovation

- **IP-Led Value Creation:** Moving beyond service outsourcing toward patent-driven enterprises.
- **Strategic Autonomy:** Reducing reliance on imported technologies in sensitive sectors.
- **Manufacturing Transformation:** Enabling India's transition from assembly-led manufacturing to technology-led production.
- **Global Competitiveness:** Building globally scalable technologies rather than incremental domestic solutions.
- **Knowledge Spillovers:** Strengthening university-industry collaboration and lab-to-market translation.

Key Challenges Facing Deep Tech Startups

- **Long Gestation Periods:** Delayed monetisation creates funding gaps.
- **Capital Constraints:** Limited availability of patient, milestone-based funding.
- **Regulatory Complexity:** Lengthy approvals in biotech, defence, and hardware sectors.

Way Forward

- **Strengthen Patient Capital Mechanisms:** Expand deep-tech focused funds and public-private co-investment models.
- **Reform Public Procurement:** Create fast-track channels for government adoption of indigenous technologies.
- **Enhance Lab-to-Market Linkages:** Incentivise academia-industry collaboration and technology transfer offices.
- **Build Regulatory Sandboxes:** Enable controlled experimentation in high-risk sectors.
- **Develop Technical Talent Pipelines:** Invest in advanced STEM education and research infrastructure. ■

Women-led Decentralised Renewable Energy Catalysing India's Last-Mile Energy Transition

The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) in association with Clean Energy Access Network (CLEAN) organised India Distributed Renewable Energy Summit (IDRES) 2026 from 9-11 February 2026 in New Delhi.

- IDRES highlighted women-led decentralised renewable energy (DRE) as a strategic pillar for India's net-zero transition.

What is Women-led Decentralised Renewable Energy (DRE)?

- Women-led DRE is a model that positions women as designers, owners, operators, and decision-makers of decentralised energy systems.
- The model integrates energy access, livelihood generation, and gender equity, often operating through Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and women's collectives.
- This vision is being codified through Chhattisgarh's proposed Women Led DRE policy, which aims to establish 5,000 women-led DRE solutions and create 50,000 green jobs by 2030.

Why Women-led DRE is Critical for India?

- **Bridging the Reliability Deficit:** While grid connectivity is high, rural consistency is low; DRE provides the reliable quality power needed for essential services.
 - ✓ E.g. In rural Chhattisgarh, forest-fringe villages use DRE to power health centers, ensuring refrigeration for life-saving vaccines during grid outages.
- **Mitigating Time Poverty:** Women spend 3-4 hours daily collecting fuelwood; DRE automates drudgerous tasks, freeing time for education or rest.
 - ✓ E.g. In Odisha, solar-powered silk-reeling machines have replaced manual processes, reducing physical drudgery.
- **Enhancing Rural Safety:** Lack of reliable lighting restricts women's mobility and safety after dark.
 - ✓ E.g. Solar-powered streetlights in Uttar Pradesh villages have reportedly increased women's participation in evening community meetings and SHG activities.
- **Climate Resilience:** Centralised grids are vulnerable to extreme weather; decentralised systems managed by locals ensure community resilience.
 - ✓ E.g. During the recent cyclones in coastal Andhra Pradesh, solar-powered micro-grids managed by

women's groups remained the only source of power for mobile charging and emergency lights.

Initiatives towards Women-led DRE

- **PM Surya Ghar:** Aims to establish 10,000 solar villages by 2030 with a focus on community and women-led management.
- **Lakhpati Didi Scheme:** Aims to create 3 crore "Lakhpati Didis" by strengthening SHG-led enterprises through credit, skills, and market support, with DRE as an enabling tool in select sectors.
- **Anjor Vision 2047 (Chhattisgarh):** A dedicated state roadmap to increase RE share to 66% through women-led green jobs and Solar Didis.

Major Challenges

High Upfront Capital Costs

- Solar appliances such as bulk milk chillers can cost up to ₹25 lakh. In the absence of low-interest green credit facilities, Self-Help Groups (SHGs) face difficulties in scaling their operations.

Technical Skill Gap

- There is a shortage of trained local women technicians, which often results in extended downtime of renewable energy installations.

Limited Market Awareness

- Many rural entrepreneurs lack awareness about decentralised renewable energy (DRE) subsidy schemes and their commercial potential.

Tapping the Full Potential of DRE

- **Policy Ecosystem by Design:** Facilitating women's participation by making them primary owners of energy assets, similar to the model used in the Ujjwala Yojana for LPG.
- **Public Investments for Private Sector:** Using public funds to de-risk private sector investments in women-led enterprises, such as solar-powered food processing or cold storage.
- **Non-traditional Technical Roles:** Training a cadre of "Solar Didis" or "Oorja Sakhis", women technicians who provide last-mile operations and maintenance services, reducing system downtime and creating dignified local employment.
- **Productive Use of Energy:** Enhancing income by providing affordable energy access to women-led institutions for milling, oil expelling, and silk reeling. ■



Polity & Governance

- Centre Launches AI Health Initiatives: SAHI and BODH
- Government Revises Startup Recognition Framework
- AI-Driven Reforms in India's Public Distribution System
- Bharat-VISTAAR: AI-Driven DPI for Farmer Empowerment
- MoSPI Releases New CPI Series with 2024 Base Year
- Bharat Taxi: India's First Cooperative-based Taxi Service

Judiciary

- SC Lays Down 4-Factor Test to Avoid Undue Sympathy in Sentencing
- Supreme Court Slams State Governments Over Freebies
- Political Leaders Must Foster Fraternity: SC
- SC Seeks Centre's Report on SC/ST Sub-Classification Verdict

News Snippets

- NSO Launches MCP Server to Make Government Data AI Ready
- National Youth Parliament Scheme Web Portal
- Substantive Motion
- Power Gap Index
- Capacity-Building Series for Gram Panchayats
- SC Asks FSSAI to Consider Warning Labels on Packaged Foods
- AI-Preneurs of India
- Forest Rights Act (FRA) Cells
- ICMR Convenes SANVAD 2026

Polity & Governance

Centre Launches AI Health Initiatives: SAHI and BODH

On 17th February 2026, the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched two pioneering digital health initiatives- SAHI and BODH, during the India AI Impact Summit 2026.

SAHI (Strategy for Artificial Intelligence in Healthcare for India)

- **National Guidance Framework:** It is a national guidance framework designed to enable the safe, ethical, evidence-based, and inclusive adoption of AI across India's healthcare system.
- **Aim:** To provide strategic direction on governance, data stewardship, validation, deployment, and monitoring of AI solutions.
- **Governance & Ethics:** Establishes clear guardrails to ensure AI assists doctors rather than replacing them, maintaining the sanctity of the physician-patient relationship.
- **Standardisation:** Offers a national direction for validating and monitoring AI tools to prevent fragmented or biased implementations.
- **Significance:** It will support States governments and private institutions in responsible adoption aligned with public health priorities like maternal health and infectious disease screening.

BODH (Benchmarking Open Data Platform for Health AI)

- **Developed by:** Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur in collaboration with the National Health Authority (NHA).
- **Objective:** To provide a privacy-preserving platform for benchmarking AI models against real-world health data without ever exposing the raw datasets.
- **Real-World Testing:** Allows developers to test their AI models against diverse, high-quality Indian datasets to ensure accuracy across different demographics.
- **Privacy-First Healthcare Architecture:** Utilises advanced technical frameworks to evaluate models without ever exposing or sharing the underlying sensitive patient data.
- **ABDM Integration:** Integrated under the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), making it a transparent resource for startups and researchers.
- **Significance:** It will act as a "certified seal" of reliability, building trust among healthcare providers and citizens.

Public Policy



Governance

Information Technology Amendment Rules, 2026

On 10th February 2026, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology notified the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Amendment Rules, 2026.

- It amends the **Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021**.
- This significantly tightens the regulatory framework governing **synthetically generated and artificial intelligence-based content** on digital platforms.

New Changes Made

Definition of Synthetic Content

- Synthetic content is **defined as audio-visual material created or altered using algorithms** that make it appear indistinguishable from a real person or actual event.

Takedown Timelines

- The new framework **significantly shortens content removal timelines for social media platforms**.
- Content deemed illegal by a court or an appropriate government authority must now be removed within 3 hours, down from the **previous 24 to 36-hour window**.
- For sensitive content, including non-consensual nudity and deepfakes, platforms are required to **act within 2 hours of reporting**.

Mandatory Disclosure and Labeling

- Platforms must **clearly label AI-generated imagery**.
- Users are required to **disclose if their content is AI-generated**.
- If disclosure is not provided, platforms must either label the content prominently or remove it, especially in cases involving non-consensual deepfakes.

Loss of Safe Harbour Protection

- Non-compliance with these rules risks the intermediary's **Safe Harbour protection under Section 79 of the IT Act**.
- Intermediaries that knowingly allow, promote, or fail to act on violative synthetic content will be considered to have failed due diligence.

Supreme Court Issues Nationwide Directions on SWM Rules 2026

On 19th February 2026, in a significant ruling, the Supreme Court expressed serious concern over the uneven implementation of India's solid waste management (SWM) framework and issued nationwide directions to ensure effective enforcement of the Solid Waste Management Rules, 2026, which will come into force on April 1, 2026.

Case Overview

- **The Petition:** The ruling arose from appeals filed by **the Bhopal Municipal Corporation** against penalties imposed by the National Green Tribunal for improper waste management.
- **Case Title:** Bhopal Municipal Corporation v. Dr Subhash C. Pandey & Ors.

Concerns Raised by SC

Right to Clean Environment under Article 21

- **Right to a clean and healthy environment** is inseparable from the right to life guaranteed under **Article 21** of the Constitution.
- **State has a constitutional duty to safeguard environmental quality and protect citizens' well-being.**

Economic Implications of Solid Waste

- Rising waste generation is closely linked to **India's evolving economic landscape**.
- **Rising use of packaged goods, online deliveries, and a shift from repair to discard culture** have sharply increased packaging waste, impacting environmental sustainability and economic stability.

Directions Issued by SC

- **Four-Stream Segregation:** Pollution Control Boards must expedite infrastructure for segregation of waste into four categories- Wet, Dry, Sanitary, and Special Care waste; and ensure immediate communication of the Rules to Bulk Waste Generators (BWGs).
- **Role of Elected Representatives:** Councillors, mayors, and ward members must promote source segregation and ensure widespread citizen participation.
- **Audits and Oversight:** Chief Secretaries to order district-level infrastructure audits; Collectors empowered to monitor local bodies, demanding photo-proof compliance reports.
- **Education Overhaul:** Inclusion of SWM in school curricula (as per Rule 33), dissemination of information in local languages through social media, and organisation of student competitions.
- **Three-tier Action:** Non-compliance will trigger a three-tier action: fines for first violations, criminal prosecution for continued breaches, and action against all responsible persons, including negligent officials.

Reports & Indices



National

NITI Aayog Releases Report on Revitalizing Apprenticeship Ecosystem

On 20th February 2026, NITI Aayog launched a policy report titled “Revitalizing Apprenticeship Ecosystem: Insights, Challenges, Recommendations and Best Practices.”

- The report presents a comprehensive analysis of India’s apprenticeship landscape.

Key Highlights

- **State Disparities:** Apprenticeship engagement is highly concentrated, with Gujarat accounting for 24.18% of total engagements under the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) in FY 2024-25.
- **Top States:** Industrially advanced states including Gujarat, Maharashtra, Haryana, Tamil Nadu, and Karnataka hold the majority of apprenticeship engagements.
- **Regional Lags:** Several states and union territories contribute less than 0.001% to the national pool, reflecting persistent regional disparities.

Challenges in the Apprenticeship Ecosystem

Aspirational Bias

- Cultural preference for traditional academic degrees over vocational training remains strong.
 - ✓ Higher unemployment rates among degree holders highlight this trend.

Inter-State Disparities

- Industrial concentration in a few states leaves many regions underrepresented in apprenticeship participation.
 - ✓ States like Assam and Madhya Pradesh lag significantly behind.

Complex Regulatory Framework

- Overlapping laws and multiple portals deter MSME participation.
 - ✓ Small enterprises often struggle with NAPS and NATS documentation requirements.

Inadequate Infrastructure

- Limited training facilities in remote districts hinder the effective implementation of programmes.

- ✓ District Skill Committees often lack the technical capacity or funding to act as nodal anchors.

Recommendations: Revitalizing India’s Apprenticeship Ecosystem

- **Common Digital Platform:** A single user-friendly platform for apprenticeship registration and tracking can reduce the administrative burden on MSMEs.
- **Apprenticeship Engagement Index:** The proposed index can foster healthy competition among states and improve skilling infrastructure.
- **Deepening MSME Participation:** Cluster-based consortia allow small industries to jointly hire and train apprentices.
- **Global Portability:** Mapping certifications to international standards can enhance global workforce mobility.
- **Awareness Campaigns:** National campaigns should elevate vocational training as a preferred career choice rather than an alternative path.

Scenarios Towards Viksit Bharat and Net Zero - Social Implications of Transition


On 10th February 2026, NITI Aayog released a report titled ‘Scenarios Towards Viksit Bharat and Net Zero - Social Implications of Transition’.

- The report **frames low-carbon development as a transformative opportunity** for socio-economic realignment, integrating technological innovation with equitable growth outcomes.

Major Highlights

Land and Water Requirements

- Under the Current Policy Scenario, land needed for power and green hydrogen grows sixfold by 2070, reaching 4.2 million hectares, while the Net Zero Scenario requires 5.92 million hectares, or 7.5–11% of India’s wasteland.
- Water consumption grows only 1.7 times by 2050 and declines post-2050 due to efficiency improvements.
- While wasteland use seems modest, these areas support grazing, fuelwood collection, and rural livelihoods, requiring careful management.



SOCIETY WATCH

Social Justice

- Gender Budgeting: Unlocking Women's Empowerment and Economic Equality in India
- 6th Global Conference on the Elimination of Child Labour
- Economic Viability of Shorter All-Oral TB Treatment in India

Socio-Economic Development

- India Highlights Rights-Based, People-Centric Development at UN Forum
- Centre Targets Six Crore 'Lakhpati Didis' by 2029-30
- PAC Highlights Implementation Gaps in SANKALP Scheme
- Navigating the Issue of Illegal Rat-Hole Mining
- India Registers Landmark Progress in Organ Donation & Transplantation

News Snippets

- PRIYA Trial on Vitamin B12
- Rashtriya Karmayogi Large Scale Jan Seva Program
- Khula
- Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)
- Sangtam Tribe

Terms in Vogue

- Tender Years Doctrine

Social Justice

Gender Budgeting: Unlocking Women's Empowerment and Economic Equality in India

In the Union Budget 2026-27, the share of Gender Budget allocation in the total Union Budget increased to 9.37% in FY 2026-27 from 8.86% in FY 2025-26.

What is Gender Budgeting in India?

- Gender budgeting is a **strategic tool used by governments to allocate resources efficiently based on the distinct needs of different genders.**
- It ensures **that policies and resource allocations are gender-sensitive** and address specific needs within existing frameworks.

Background

- India's commitment to gender equality began with the ratification of the **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), 1979, in 1993.**
- This commitment culminated in the introduction of the **first Gender Budget Statement in 2005-06**, which has since been presented annually, reflecting sustained emphasis on gender-sensitive policymaking.

How has Gender Budgeting Ensured Women's Empowerment in India?

Integration through Gender Mainstreaming

- It acts as a powerful tool for achieving gender mainstreaming so as to ensure that benefits of development reach women as much as men.

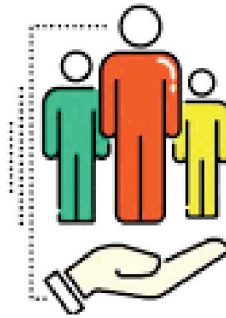
Improving Socio-Economic Outcomes

- Gender budgeting helps women to control and benefit from resources, assets, and income.
- For example, schemes like **Sukanya Samridhi Yojana are designed to enhance the economic status** of girls from a young age, ensuring that the benefits of national development are shared equitably.

Improvements in Human Development Indicators

- There is an increased focus on the education, health, and safety of women through these fiscal measures.
- The **Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao initiative** has shown tangible results in increasing the child sex ratio in vulnerable areas.
- Similarly, **health-oriented policies such as Janani Suraksha Yojana and the Maternity Benefit Act** ensure that women's health is prioritised through dedicated funding.

Welfare Schemes



Social Welfare

PM RAHAT: Cashless Treatment of Road Accident Victims

On 14th February 2026, the Union Government launched the PM RAHAT (Road Accident Victim Hospitalization and Assured Treatment) Scheme.

What is PM RAHAT Scheme?

- It is a national cashless treatment scheme for road accident victims to ensure **immediate medical care during the Golden Hour**.
- **Need:** India records a significant number of road accident fatalities every year, many of which are preventable with timely medical intervention.
 - ✓ Studies indicate that nearly **50% of road accident deaths can be averted if victims are admitted to hospital within the first hour.**



PM RAHAT Scheme

Life-Saving Protection for Every Citizen

The Prime Minister has approved the launch of the PM RAHAT Scheme

Under this initiative, accident victims will get cashless treatment of up to ₹1.5 lakh, ensuring that no life is lost due to lack of immediate medical help



Key Points

- **Coverage:** Every eligible road accident victim on any category of road will be entitled to cashless treatment up to Rs. 1.5 lakh per victim, for period of 7 days from the date of accident.
- **Implementation and Access:** It operates through a technology-driven framework that creates a seamless digital link from accident reporting to claim settlement, combining:
 - ✓ **Electronic Detailed Accident Report (eDAR) platform** (from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways).
 - ✓ **Transaction Management System (TMS 2.0)** of the National Health Authority.
- **Funding Mechanism:** Reimbursement to hospitals will be made through the Motor Vehicle Accident Fund (MVAFF).
- **Insurance-based Payment:** Payments from General Insurance Companies in insured vehicle cases.
- **Fast Claim Settlement:** Approved claims are paid within 10 days to ensure uninterrupted hospital treatment.
- **Grievance Redressal:** Complaints of road accident victims handled by a Grievance Redressal Officer (GRO).
 - ✓ **GRO nominated by the District Road Safety Committee**, chaired by the District Collector/District Magistrate/Deputy Commissioner.

Significance

- Ensures **life-saving treatment** during the Golden Hour.
- **Reduces preventable road accident deaths.**
- **Promotes citizen-centric governance** and financial protection.
- **Strengthens India's emergency healthcare** and road safety ecosystem.

Urban Challenge Fund: Transforming India's Urban Infrastructure

On 13th February 2026, the Union Cabinet approved the launch of a Rs. 1 lakh crore Urban Challenge Fund (UCF) to drive market-led urban infrastructure development and strengthen city governance across India.



Heritage Art & Culture

Art & Culture

- Devnimori Relics of Lord Buddha
- Commemorative Stamps on Puppets of India
- 100 Years of Ol Chiki Script
- Losar Festival
- Chennakeshava Temple

Art & Culture

Devnimori Relics of Lord Buddha

On 11th February 2026, the sacred Devnimori relics of Lord Buddha returned to India following a week-long public exposition at the Gangaramaya Temple in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

- The Holy Relics were taken abroad for their first-ever international exposition.

Devnimori Relics: An Overview

Origin Site

- The relics were discovered at the Devnimori archaeological site near Shamlaji in Gujarat's Aravalli district, a location of great significance as an ancient Buddhist center.

Excavation History

- The site was first scientifically explored in 1957 by Prof. S. N. Chowdhry.

Key Archaeological Discoveries at Devnimori

Relic Casket

- A stone casket made of green schist was found inside the **Devnimori Stupa**, positioned approximately 24 feet from the base level.

Sacred Inscription

- The casket carries inscriptions in **Brahmi script and Sanskrit**, which read "**Dashabala Sharira Nilaya**," meaning the abode of Lord Buddha's bodily relics, further emphasizing the sacred nature of the find.

- 80th Anniversary of the 1946 Royal Indian Navy Revolt

Historical Findings

- Naneghat Caves

Historical Figures

- Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati

News Snippets

- Thai Poosam
- Rakhigarhi to be Developed as an Iconic Site
- Herath Poshte

Copper Container

- A copper box was discovered along with the casket.
- It featured a **flat base and a slip-on lid with a rim ledge**, ensuring secure preservation of the sacred relics inside.

Amphora Bottle

- Among the findings was a **miniature gold-coated bottle** with a cylindrical body, narrow neck, and screw-type lid, resembling ancient amphora-style vessels used for storage.

Historical Significance

- The findings indicate the strong presence and spread of Buddhism in western India during the early Common Era.

Commemorative Stamps on Puppets of India

On 13th February 2026, the Department of Posts issued a set of 8 Commemorative Postage Stamps on "Puppets of India" at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi.

Puppetry in India

- Puppetry in India is among the **nation's oldest and most vibrant storytelling traditions**, embodying its rich cultural diversity and artistic ingenuity.
- India's traditional puppetry is broadly classified into four forms- **string, glove, rod and shadow puppets**, each with its own distinctive style and regional character.

Eight Puppet Traditions Depicted on Stamp

1. Kathputli (Rajasthan)

- **Traditional string puppet play** from Rajasthan.

ECONOMY WATCH

Agriculture & Allied Sector

- Integrated Farming System For Small Farmers
- India's Rice Boom: Feeding the Nation or Fueling Future Risks

Banking, Financial Services & Insurance

- Centre Launches CBDC-based Digital Food Coupon Pilot in Gujarat
- Municipal Bonds: A Path to Self-Reliant Cities

Infrastructure

- National Monetisation Pipeline 2.0 (NMP 2.0)
- India Enhances Domestic Rare Earth Ecosystem
- NGT Clears Great Nicobar Island Mega-infrastructure Project
- India Distributed Renewable Energy Summit 2026

Industry

- MSMEs: Core of India's Global Growth Strategy
- Strengthening Capital Goods Sector
- Cabinet Approves Startup India Fund of Funds 2.0
- Centre Launches Seven New Interventions Under EPM

Basics of Indian Economy

- Merchandise Trade Indices

News Snippets

- Access Pass for Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) Fishing
- Demwe Lower Hydel Project
- Miniratna Status for Yantra India Limited
- RBI Simplifies the Voluntary Retention Route
- Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS)
- Gold Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs)
- Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF)
- RBI Issues Draft Revised Guidelines for Lead Bank Scheme
- 109th Meeting of the Network Planning Group
- Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP)
- Food Corporation of India (FCI)

Fact Sheet

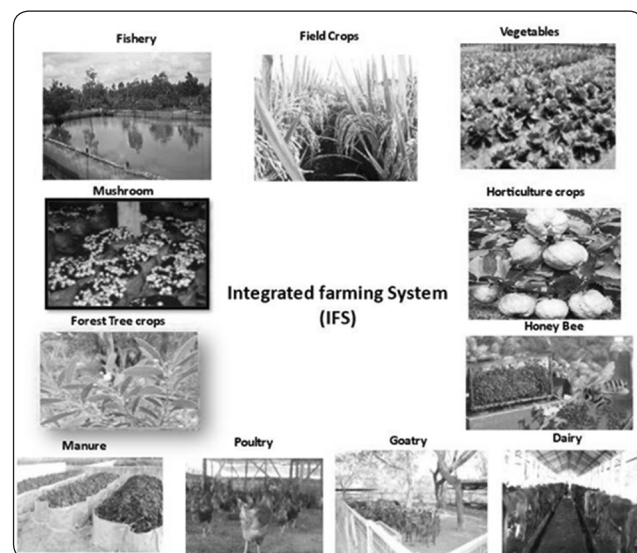
Agriculture & Allied Sector

Integrated Farming System For Small Farmers

On 8th February 2026, while interacting with the Scientists of the Indian Institute of Horticultural Research, Union Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Minister called on scientists to develop integrated farming models, aiming to enhance the income of small farmers.

What is Integrated Farming System (IFS)?

- It is a **sustainable agricultural system** that integrates livestock, crop production, fish, poultry, tree crops, plantation crops and other systems that benefit each other.
- It is based on the **concept that 'there is no waste' and 'waste is only a misplaced resource'** which means waste from one component becomes an input for another part of the system.



How Integrated Farming System Can Help Small Farmers?

Diversification of Income

- By combining crops, horticulture, livestock, poultry, and fisheries on a single farm, farmers are not dependent on just one source of income.
- If one fails due to weather or market fluctuations, other sources can help offset the loss.

Better Resource Utilisation

- Integrated farming makes efficient use of land, water, and nutrients.
- For example, animal waste can be used as fertilizer for crops, while crop residues can feed livestock, reducing overall input costs.

SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Energy Technology

- New Cathode Material Boosts Zinc-Ion Batteries for Grid Storage
- Sunlight-Powered Self-Charging Energy Storage Device
- Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS)

Quantum Technology

- L&T Wins Contract to Build India's LIGO Observatory in Maharashtra

Defence Technology

- Agni-III Missile Test: India Validates Strategic Deterrence Capability
- Solid Fuel Ducted Ramjet (SFDR) Technology

Information Technology

- INCOIS Launches Three Ocean Information Services

Basic Science

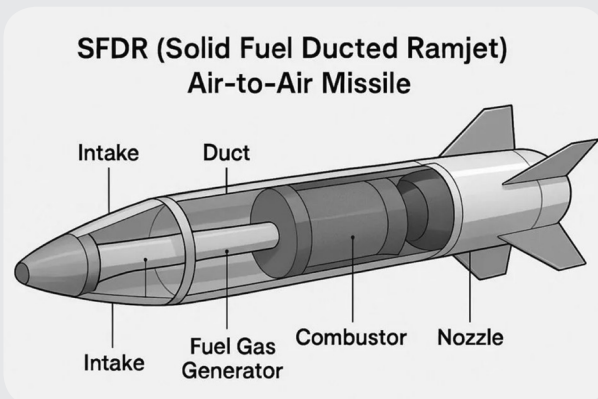
- Indigenous Td Vaccine Launched

News Snippets

- VoicERA on BHASHINI National Infrastructure
- WHO Prequalifies Novel Oral Polio Vaccine Type 2 (nOPV2)

Terms in Vogue

- SaaSocalypse
- In-Orbit Snooping
- Factsheet
- AI@Work



Energy Technology

New Cathode Material Boosts Zinc-Ion Batteries for Grid Storage

On 19th February 2026, scientists announced the development of a novel cathode material that significantly enhances the performance and stability of aqueous zinc-ion batteries (AZIBs).

What are Aqueous Zinc-Ion Batteries (AZIBs)?

- AZIBs use water-based electrolytes instead of flammable organic solvents.
- Considered safer and more environmentally friendly alternatives.
- Zinc metal serves directly as the anode.
- Suitable for renewable energy storage applications.
- Zinc is abundant, cost-effective, and offers high theoretical capacity.

Why It Matters

- **Grid Storage Potential:** Enables safer, affordable renewable energy storage.
- **Sustainability Advantage:** Avoids lithium scarcity and flammable electrolytes.
- **Energy Transition Support:** Strengthens storage solutions for solar and wind power.
- **Scalability Promise:** Offers pathway for large-scale, long-life battery systems.

Real-Life Applications of Zinc-Ion Batteries

- Store excess solar and wind energy during peak generation.
- Release stored power during low-generation periods
- Power backup systems for hospitals and schools.
- Reliable storage for rural microgrids.
- Support telecom towers and data centres.
- Solar-powered irrigation storage systems.

Sunlight-Powered Self-Charging Energy Storage Device

Recently, scientists at the Centre for Nano and Soft Matter Sciences (CeNS), Bengaluru, under DST, developed a photo-rechargeable supercapacitor that can both capture and store solar energy.

- It reduces cost, complexity and energy loss by integrating solar harvesting and storage in a single device, aiding clean and decentralised energy solutions.

What Has Been Developed?

- A **photo-capacitor** (sunlight-powered supercapacitor) that **converts sunlight into electricity and stores it simultaneously**.



Biodiversity

- India Adds Two New Ramsar Sites
- CMFRI Achieves Induced Breeding of Mangrove Clam
- Two New 'Bio-Warrior' Species Discovered
- Fishing Cat Population in Kaziranga National Park

Climate Change

- Species Turnover Slowdown Despite Climate Change

Disaster Management

- 16th Finance Commission on Heatwaves & Lightning as National Disasters

Sustainable Development

- NHA to Develop 'Bee Corridors' along National Highways

News Snippets

- Loggerhead sea turtle Faces Climate Change Threat
- Tiny Squat Lobster Discovered In Lakshadweep
- Study on Evolution of Kaziranga as Habitat of One-Horned Rhinoceros
- New Dragonfly Species 'Lyriothemis keralensis' Discovered in Kerala
- Smooth-coated Otters

Terms in Vogue

- Snowball Earth
- Functional Diversity

Factsheet

- The Evolving Spectrum of Energy Sources: Key Statistics

Biodiversity

India Adds Two New Ramsar Sites

Ahead of World Wetlands Day on 2nd February 2026, India added 2 new sites to the Ramsar list of Wetlands of International Importance, taking the country's total to 98.

What is the Ramsar Convention?

- An **international treaty (1971, Ramsar, Iran)** for the **conservation and wise use of wetlands**.
- Countries identify wetlands meeting ecological criteria (e.g. rare species, bird habitats) and nominate them to the **Ramsar Secretariat**.
- Once listed, sites must be **managed sustainably** to prevent ecological degradation.

Description of the Newly Added Sites

Chhari-Dhand Wetland (Kutch, Gujarat)

- A **seasonal saline wetland** located between the **Banni grasslands** and the **Rann of Kutch salt flats**.
- Key **wintering ground for migratory waterfowl**.
- **Supports:**
 - ✓ **Critically endangered:** Sociable lapwing
 - ✓ **Vulnerable:** Common pochard
 - ✓ **~30,000 common cranes (Grus grus)** annually
- Also habitat for desert fauna such as **chinkara, wolves, caracal, desert cat and desert fox**.

Patna Bird Sanctuary (Etah, Uttar Pradesh)

- Comprises **freshwater marshes, grasslands and woodlands**, surrounded by agricultural land.
- High biodiversity:
 - ✓ 178 bird species
 - ✓ 252 plant species
- Recognised as an **Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA)** by **BirdLife International**.
- Plays a crucial role in supporting **resident and migratory waterbirds**.

STATUS OF WETLANDS IN INDIA

- **Rapid Expansion:** As of January 31, 2026, India boasts 98 Ramsar Sites.
- **Regional Leader:** India has the largest network of Ramsar sites in South Asia.
- **Top State:** Tamil Nadu holds the highest number of Ramsar sites in India (20).
- **Conservation Focus:** The government is reversing the trend of shrinking wetlands through the "Sahbhagita" mission, encouraging a people's movement for conservation.
- **Monitoring Tools:** The "Wetlands of India Portal" serves as a central hub for data and management, while the 2017 Wetland Rules provide legal protection.



WORLD WATCH

Bilateral Relations

- India-UK Sign Social Security Agreement
- India-Malaysia Bilateral Ties Strengthened
- India-US Interim Trade Agreement Framework
- India and Israel Elevate Ties to Special Strategic Partnership
- India-Brazil Strategic Ties Get New Impetus
- India-Seychelles Relations: Expanding Cooperation Across Sectors
- India-Greece Sign Defence Cooperation Pact
- India-UK Offshore Wind Taskforce Launched

Agreements

- Expiry of New START Treaty Raises Concerns of a New Nuclear Arms Race
- India Joins US-led Pax Silica Alliance

Groupings

- NATO Launches 'Arctic Sentry' Mission to Strengthen Presence in the Arctic

News Snippets

- India Joins BRICS Centre for Industrial Competencies
- India, Kazakhstan Review Strategic Partnership
- Sweden-India Technology and Artificial Intelligence Corridor (SITAC)

Terms in Vogue

- Project Vault

Bilateral Relations

India-UK Sign Social Security Agreement

On 10th February, 2026, India and the United Kingdom signed a Social Security Agreement in New Delhi to avoid dual contributions for employees on temporary overseas assignments.

Key Features of the Agreement

- The agreement **aims to prevent employees and employers from paying social security** contributions in both countries simultaneously during overseas assignments.
- Applicable for assignments **up to 36 months** in partner country.
- Ensures continued **social security coverage** for employees during overseas postings.
- Enables **issuance of Certificates of Coverage** through EPFO portal.

Background

- India has been entering into bilateral Social Security Agreements (SSAs) with other countries.
- The objective is to protect Indian professionals and skilled workers working abroad and enhance the competitiveness of Indian companies.
- Commitment for India-UK Social Security Agreement announced during **India-UK CETA signing in July 2025**.

Significance

- Reduces **financial burden** on Indian professionals working in the UK.
- **Improves mobility of skilled workforce** between both countries.
- **Enhances competitiveness** of Indian service sector companies abroad.
- **Strengthens India-UK cooperation** in trade and services sectors.

India-Malaysia Bilateral Ties Strengthened

On 7-8 February 2026, Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Malaysia at the invitation of Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim; both leaders reviewed bilateral ties and advanced the India-Malaysia Comprehensive Strategic Partnership through cooperation across trade, defence, digital economy, energy, and regional issues.

Key Outcomes

Strategic and Security Cooperation

- ✓ Agreements were signed on security cooperation, UN peacekeeping, combating and preventing corruption, and disaster management.

News Through MAPS



NETHERLANDS

On 6th February 2026, India and the Netherlands strengthened clean energy cooperation with the launch of the India-Netherlands Hydrogen Fellowship Programme and a new academic partnership between the University of Groningen and 19 Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs).

Netherlands: Key Facts

- Location/Unique Feature:** Low-lying country in Western Europe at the Rhine-Meuse-Scheldt delta; about one-third of land lies at or below sea level, protected by dikes, polders, and pumps.
- Importance for India:** Major European gateway via Rotterdam port; key partner in trade, logistics, agri-tech, water management, climate action, and innovation.
- Indian Diaspora/Partnerships:** Indian community of around 150,000-200,000; strong cooperation in science, education, water management, and sustainable development.
- Trade:** The Netherlands is India's largest European export destination. During the 2024-25 fiscal year, India exported USD 22.763 billion worth of goods.
- Resources:** Limited mineral resources; economy driven by technology, advanced agriculture, logistics, chemicals, and services; natural gas production largely phased down.
- Population/Habitat:** Population about 17-18 million.
- Disputes/Conflicts:** Stable EU and NATO member with no active territorial disputes; key concerns include sea-level rise, housing pressure, and migration management.



(Image Source: britannica.com)

GENERAL STUDIES MOCK TEST

SET-1

1. With reference to the geological heritage of India, consider the following statements regarding the Deccan Traps at Panchgani and Mahabaleshwar:

1. These sites have been recently included in the Tentative List of UNESCO's World Heritage Convention.
2. They are geologically significant as they form an integral part of the Koyna Wildlife Sanctuary in the Western Ghats.
3. The formation is classified under the 'Mixed' category of UNESCO World Heritage sites due to its combined geological and cultural value.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

2. Consider the following statements:

Statement I: The fossil assemblage at Salkhan Fossil Park is considered a crucial biological record of the "Great Oxidation Event" in Earth's history.

Statement II: The park contains one of the oldest and most well-preserved occurrences of Stromatolites, which are microbial structures created by cyanobacteria.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- (a) Both Statement I and Statement II are correct and Statement II explains Statement I
(b) Both Statement I and Statement II are correct but Statement II does not explain Statement I
(c) Statement I is correct but Statement II is not correct
(d) Statement I is not correct but Statement II is correct

3. Consider the following pairs of cities in the UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) and their respective fields:

1. Lucknow: Gastronomy 2. Gwalior: Music
3. Kozhikode: Literature 4. Srinagar: Design

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two
(c) Only three (d) All four

4. Regarding the Chola Gangam Lake (Ponneri), how many of the following statements are correct?

1. It was commissioned by Rajaraja Chola I to commemorate his maritime expedition to South East Asia.
2. It is recognized as the largest ancient man-made lake in India.
3. The lake is historically referred to as the "liquid pillar of victory."
4. It is fed by a canal connecting it to the Kollidam River, a tributary of the Kaveri.

How many of the statements given above are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two
(c) Only three (d) All four

5. Which of the following Chola temples is uniquely characterized by stone steps intricately carved to represent the seven musical notes (Swaras)?

- (a) Brihadeeswara Temple
(b) Gangaikonda Cholapuram Temple
(c) Airavatesvara Temple
(d) Vijayalaya Choleeswaram Temple

6. With reference to the Mehrgarh archaeological site, consider the following statements:

1. It is a Neolithic site situated at the mouth of the Bolan Pass in present-day Pakistan.
2. Recent radiocarbon dating has proposed to revise its age to a more recent period, from 8000 BCE to 5200 BCE.
3. The site provides the earliest known evidence of cotton cultivation in the Old World.
4. Being a site of "Outstanding Universal Value," it is currently an inscribed UNESCO World Heritage Site in South Asia.

UPSC CSE PRELIMS 2026

99. Consider the following pairs:

1. Asiatic Lion: 'Largely Depleted' status (IUCN)
2. Cheetah: Reintroduced via the 'Project Tiger' umbrella
3. Dugong: First conservation reserve in Palk Bay
4. Snow Leopard: State animal of Himachal Pradesh

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two
(c) Only three (d) All four

100. Regarding the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), which of the following is not a secretariat or initiative hosted/managed by it?

- (a) Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
(b) Convention on Migratory Species (CMS)
(c) Global Environment Facility (GEF)
(d) Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

Answers and Explanations

1. (a) Statement 3 is incorrect because the Deccan Traps at Panchgani and Mahabaleshwar are included in the Tentative List under the Natural Heritage category, not the Mixed category. Mixed sites must satisfy criteria for both natural and cultural significance simultaneously. These traps are primarily recognized for their unique volcanic architecture and laterite formations.
2. (a) Stromatolites are formed by communities of blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) that were the first organisms to release oxygen through photosynthesis. Their massive presence at this site (dating back 1.4 billion years) directly records the period when oxygen first began to accumulate in the atmosphere.
3. (c) Pair 4 is incorrectly matched. Srinagar was designated as a UNESCO Creative City for Crafts and Folk Art (in 2021., not Design. Design is a separate creative field under UCCN, and currently, no Indian city is specifically designated under Design (Mumbai is for Film, Hyderabad and Lucknow for Gastronomy, and Chennai/Varanasi/Gwalior for Music).
4. (c) Statement 1 is incorrect because the lake was built by Rajendra Chola I (son of Rajaraja I) to commemorate his conquest of the Ganga valley and his northern Indian victories. Rajendra Chola I also assumed the title 'Gangaikonda Cholan' and established the capital Gangaikonda Cholapuram near this lake.
5. (c) The Airavatesvara Temple at Darasuram, built by Rajaraja Chola II, features "singing steps" made of stone that produce different musical notes when stepped upon. It is also known for its stonework that resembles a chariot and its inscriptions depicting stories from ancient Indian Puranas.
6. (b) Statement 4 is incorrect. While Mehrgarh is a vital archaeological site, it is not currently an inscribed UNESCO World Heritage Site.
7. (c) Statement 2 is incorrect because the inscriptions are written in the early Brahmi script, which was the standard script for the Satavahana period in the Deccan. Kharosthi was primarily prevalent in the Gandhara region (North-West). The Hāritiputra inscription at this site suggests a political alliance between the Satavahanas and the contemporary Chutu dynasty.
8. (b) Statement 1 is incorrect because Nalanda was founded by Emperor Kumaragupta of the Gupta dynasty, not the Pala dynasty. The Pala rulers (8th-12th century) were later patrons who supported the university during its peak and subsequent transition towards Vajrayana (Tantric) Buddhism, which eventually contributed to its internal decline before its destruction.
9. (b) Statement 3 is incorrect. Members of the International Advisory Committee (IAC) of the MoW Programme serve in a personal capacity, appointed by the Director-General of UNESCO, and do not represent their national governments. This ensures technical and professional autonomy in evaluating the documentary heritage for the register.
10. (b) Statement 2 is incorrect because the relationship is the opposite: Bhava refers to the emotions portrayed by the actors (the cause), while Rasa (the effect) is the aesthetic experience or "flavour" savoured by the spectator. Bhava is the mental state, and Rasa is the distilled essence of that emotion.
11. (b) Bidriware, originating from Bidar (Karnataka), uses a unique alloy of zinc and copper. The distinctive black colour is achieved by dipping the article in a solution of soil from the Bidar Fort (rich in ammonium chloride). Option (a) describes techniques associated with Dokra, (c) describes Pattachitra/Patua, and (d) refers to Silver Filigree (Tarakasi).
12. (b) Statement 2 is incorrect because Dokra is practised by several tribes beyond the Dhokra Damars, including the Gadwas, Gonds, and Dhurwas across Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Jharkhand. It is not exclusive to West Bengal.
13. (b) Statement 1 is incorrect because the CCI is a statutory body functioning under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA), not the Ministry

GENERAL STUDIES MOCK TEST

SET-2

1. Consider the following statements about the Mesolithic transition towards a more semi-sedentary life in the Indian subcontinent:

- Evidence of seasonal camps/longer occupation is often inferred from repeated hearths, floor levels, and post-holes.
- Formal burials/cemeteries and repeated use of the same habitation zone indicate reduced mobility.
- The dominance of microlithic toolkits by itself proves full-fledged agriculture in the Mesolithic.
- Increased use of grinding stones/querns indicate broader-spectrum subsistence beyond large-game hunting.

How many of the above statements are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two
(c) Only three (d) All four

2. With reference to the Nayankara system, consider the following statements:

- Nayakas generally held revenue assignments (often described as *amaram*) in return for maintaining troops and providing military service.
- The system was designed to be strictly hereditary and legally permanent, comparable to a classic “hereditary landlord” model.
- Compared to many North Indian “feudal-like” arrangements, a key intended feature was greater royal control via transferability and service conditions.
- Over time, the system could still encourage local power consolidation, creating tensions between centre and chiefs.

Which of the above statements are correct?

- (a) 1, 3 and 4 only (b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 2, 3 and 4 only (d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

3. Consider the following Statements:

Statement I: The Airy model explains high mountains primarily through thicker crustal “roots” of approximately similar density, whereas the Pratt model explains elevation through lateral density

variations at similar compensation depth.

Statement II: In the Airy model, columns have uniform density but variable thickness; in the Pratt model, columns have uniform thickness but variable density, so topographic highs can be supported by lower-density material.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- (a) Both Statement I and Statement II are correct and Statement II explains Statement I
(b) Both Statement I and Statement II are correct but Statement II does not explain Statement I
(c) Statement I is correct but Statement II is not correct
(d) Statement I is not correct but Statement II is correct

4. Match List-I (Pelagic deposit) with List-II (Most appropriate formation condition/distribution control):

List-I	List-II
A. Calcareous ooze	1. Dominant, far from land in deep basins with very slow accumulation; often associated with oxidation and minimal biogenic input
B. Siliceous ooze	2. Common where biological productivity of siliceous organisms is high (e.g., certain upwelling/high-latitude belts)
C. Red clay	3. Favoured in depths shallower than the Carbonate Compensation Depth (CCD), where CaCO_3 is less dissolved and can accumulate
D. Terrigenous deposits	4. Typically concentrated near continental margins due to land-derived sediment supply

Select the correct answer from the codes given below:

- (a) A-3, B-2, C-1, D-4 (b) A-2, B-3, C-1, D-4
(c) A-3, B-1, C-2, D-4 (d) A-4, B-2, C-1, D-3

General Studies Mock Test Set-2

98. With reference to Buddhist stupa architecture, consider the following statements:

1. The anda forms the hemispherical mound symbolising the cosmic womb.
2. The harmika is a square railing above the dome supporting the chhatras.
3. Chhatras represent spiritual elevation and the axis mundi concept.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1, 2 and 3 (d) 1 only

99. Consider the following statements:

1. Net-zero balances residual emissions through removals.
2. Absolute zero implies zero gross emissions.
3. Net-zero requires every sector to eliminate emissions completely.

4. Hard-to-abate sectors may rely on carbon removals in net-zero pathways.

How many of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two
(c) Only three (d) All four

100. Consider the following statements:

1. Bilateral local-currency trade reduces reliance on the US dollar.
2. Dollar dominance is reinforced by deep capital markets and network effects.
3. De-dollarisation implies immediate replacement by a single alternative currency.
4. Financial depth, convertibility, and trust affect currency substitution speed.

How many of the above statement(s) is/are correct?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two
(c) Only three (d) All four

Answers and Explanations

1. (c) Statement 3 is incorrect. Microliths indicate efficient composite tools and adaptive hunting/foraging, not agriculture by themselves. The non-obvious indicators of semi-sedentism are site re-occupation signals (multiple hearths/floors), formal burials, and processing tools (grinding stones) suggesting intensified plant/seed use and diversified diets-without implying Neolithic farming.
2. (a) The Nayankara framework was not conceived as an absolutely hereditary, permanent landlord right; it was tied to service obligations and (in principle) could be reassigned, unlike a pure hereditary estate logic.
3. (a) Airy relies on variable thickness (deep crustal roots under mountains), while Pratt relies on variable density (lighter columns float higher at the same compensation level). This distinction is crucial for interpreting why some elevated regions show strong crustal thickening (Airy-type) versus buoyancy from compositional/thermal differences (Pratt-type).
4. (a) Red clay dominates where biogenic supply is low and deposition is extremely slow, often in remote abyssal plains. Calcareous ooze is controlled by the CCD-below it CaCO_3 dissolves rapidly. Siliceous ooze tracks productivity belts, not simply depth.
5. (b) The executive can exercise legislative functions through constitutionally permitted mechanisms (e.g., ordinances, rule-making/delegated legislation within limits). The key nuance is that Indian separation of powers is principled but flexible-courts emphasise boundaries against institutional usurpation, while accepting overlap as constitutional design (unlike a rigid “strict separation” template).
6. (c) Statement 3 is incorrect. Inversion does not necessarily mean long-term inflation expectations have collapsed; it can reflect expected future easing, flight-to-safety, and term-premium dynamics. Research separates the spread into expectations vs term premium; recession predictability is mainly linked to expectations of weaker future short rates rather than term-premium moves alone.
7. (c) Statement 3 is incorrect. Secondary succession is *typically* faster because soil/biota remain, but if disturbance removes soil or repeatedly resets the system, recovery can be slow. “Secondary” is defined by starting conditions (soil present), not a guaranteed timeline. Soil development and seed bank retention are the real speed determinants.
8. (a) Ground detectors are limited by seismic/thermal noise, so they target audio-band events. PTAs do not “directly detect strain” like LIGO; they infer ultra-low-frequency waves via timing correlations. CMB B-modes, if primordial, are an imprint of early-universe tensor modes, not merger waveforms.
9. (a) “The Area” is not a State’s EEZ/continental shelf, so regulation cannot be purely national. Statement II explains why ISA matters and why governance is contested: exploitation rules are still evolving amid concerns like sediment plumes, biodiversity loss, and monitoring difficulty. Strategic interest persists due to polymetallic nodules carrying nickel/cobalt/manganese critical for industry.

GENERAL STUDIES MOCK TEST

SET-3

1. With reference to the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India, consider the following statements:

1. The MPC is mandated to maintain a target consumer price inflation of 4%, with an upper and lower tolerance band of 2% respectively.
2. Decisions are made by a majority of votes, and in the case of a tie, the Governor of the RBI possesses a second or casting vote.
3. Monetary transmission is considered most efficient when the Bank Rate is adjusted, as it serves as the primary floor of the Liquidity Adjustment Facility (LAF) corridor.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 2 only (b) 2 only
(c) 1 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

2. Consider the following statements:

Statement I: The Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) has enhanced the RBI's ability to manage excess liquidity in the banking system more flexibly than the traditional Reverse Repo.

Statement II: Unlike the Fixed Rate Reverse Repo, the SDF allows the RBI to absorb liquidity from commercial banks without the requirement of providing government securities as collateral.

Which one of the following is correct in respect of the above statements?

- (a) Both Statement I and Statement II are correct and Statement II explains Statement I
(b) Both Statement I and Statement II are correct but Statement II does not explain Statement I
(c) Statement I is correct but Statement II is not correct
(d) Statement I is not correct but Statement II is correct

3. Consider the following pairs regarding the classification of Digital Rupee (e₹):

1. Retail CBDC (e₹-R): Interbank wholesale settlements
2. Wholesale CBDC (e₹-W): Use by non-financial consumers and businesses
3. Token-based system: Digital representation of a bearer instrument
4. Account-based system: Verified through the identity of the account holder

How many of the above pairs are correctly matched?

- (a) Only one (b) Only two
(c) Only three (d) All four

4. Regarding the targets and compliance findings of the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act, how many of the following are correct?

1. The Act mandates that the CAG must conduct an annual compliance review of its provisions.
2. The targets for Revenue Deficit and Effective Revenue Deficit were removed via the 2018 amendment.
3. The central government's debt-to-GDP ratio peaked at approximately 61% in FY 2020-21.
4. The Act allows for an 'escape clause' trigger, permitting a deviation from the fiscal deficit target by up to 1.5% of GDP in a single year.

Options:

- (a) Only one (b) Only two
(c) Only three (d) All four

5. In the GST Council's decision-making process, which of the following describes the weighted voting formula required to pass a resolution?

- (a) A simple majority of the members present and voting.
(b) Two-thirds majority, where the Centre has one-half and States have one-half of the total weight.
(c) Three-fourths majority, where the Centre has one-third and States have two-thirds of the total weight.
(d) Consensus-based decision where any single state possesses a veto power over rate rationalization.

General Studies Mock Test Set-3

98. In the context of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms, consider the following statements:

1. The system of “Dyarchy” divided provincial subjects into ‘Reserved’ (held by the Governor) and ‘Transferred’ (held by Indian ministers).
2. For the first time, the Act introduced bicameralism and direct elections in the Central Legislature.
3. The system of Dyarchy failed because the ‘Transferred’ subjects (like health and education) lacked independent financial control, which remained a ‘Reserved’ subject.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 1 and 2 only
(c) 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

99. Regarding the “Underground Activities” during the Quit India Movement (1942), consider the following:

1. A “Secret Congress Radio” was operated by Usha Mehta and her associates to bypass British censorship.
2. The movement was unique as it saw the total participation of the Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha in parallel underground networks.

3. Parallel governments (*Sarkars*) were established in regions like Satara, Tamluk and Ballia.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 and 3 only (b) 1 only
(c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

100. In the context of the leadership patterns of the Revolt of 1857, consider the following:

1. The leaders of the revolt, such as Nana Sahib and Lakshmi Bai, were primarily motivated by the loss of their individual feudal privileges and titles.
2. The revolt was characterized by a seamless coordination between the centres of Delhi, Lucknow, and Kanpur through a centralized military command.
3. The failure of the revolt is linked to the “intellectual divide,” where the modern educated middle class remained neutral or supported the British.

Which of the statement(s) given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only (b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only (d) 1, 2 and 3

Answers and Explanations

1. (a) Statement 3 is incorrect because the Repo Rate, not the Bank Rate, is the primary policy rate used to signal the monetary policy stance and drive transmission. Furthermore, the Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) currently serves as the floor of the LAF corridor, while the Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) acts as the ceiling. The Bank Rate is generally aligned with the MSF.
2. (a) The SDF was introduced as a non-collateralized tool, making it more flexible for the RBI to manage liquidity compared to the traditional Reverse Repo, which required G-Secs as collateral. This flexibility is precisely why it was made the new “floor” of the policy corridor.
3. (b) Pairs 3 and 4 are incorrectly matched (swapped). In a Token-based system, the person receiving the token verifies its authenticity (similar to cash); it acts as a digital bearer instrument. In an Account-based system, the intermediary verifies the identity of the account holder to authorize the transaction.
4. (c) Statement 4 is incorrect. The 2018 amendment actually emphasized debt-to-GDP ratios as the primary target for fiscal sustainability, while the targets for Revenue Deficit and Effective Revenue Deficit were removed. The Act currently focuses on a glide path toward a 4.5% fiscal deficit.
5. (c) Under Article 279A, decisions of the GST Council require a three-fourths majority. The Central Government holds one-third of the voting power, and all the States together hold two-thirds. This ensures a cooperative federal structure where neither the Centre nor a small group of states can act unilaterally.
6. (a) Statement 3 is incorrect. The CBDT is a statutory authority that functions under the Central Board of Revenue Act, 1963, and is a part of the Department of Revenue under the Ministry of Finance, not the PMO. The faceless architecture is designed to increase transparency and reduce corruption.
7. (d) All statements are correct. UPI Lite targets small transactions (up to ₹500) to declutter bank passbooks. Interoperability ensures that the e₹-R can be scanned via existing UPI QRs. The cross-border expansion (Singapore’s PayNow, etc.) is part of the strategy to internationalize India’s digital payment stack.
8. (a) Statement 2 is incorrect; India has only partial Capital Account Convertibility, although it is liberalized for certain sectors. Statement 3 is

GENERAL STUDIES MOCK TEST

SET-4

1. With reference to the Subtropical Westerly Jet Stream (STWJ) and Indian winter weather, consider the following statements:
1. The southward shift of the STWJ in winter helps steer Western Disturbances towards north and northwest India.
 2. Persistent winter fog and low clouds over the Indo-Gangetic Plain are mainly because the STWJ causes strong vertical mixing of the boundary layer.
 3. A strong STWJ can enhance the upper-level divergence ahead of a trough, aiding cyclogenesis/precipitation linked with Western Disturbances.
 4. The Tropical Easterly Jet (TEJ) is a dominant feature of Indian winter, shaping the core winter rainfall pattern.
- Which of the above statements are correct?
- (a) 1 and 3 only (b) 1, 2 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 4 only (d) 1, 3 and 4 only
2. With reference to Ashoka's Dhamma, consider the following statements:
1. It aimed at ethical governance and social harmony, not conversion to Buddhism.
 2. It emphasised non-violence, respect for elders, tolerance, and humane treatment of servants and prisoners.
 3. It was implemented mainly through Buddhist monasteries as official administrative units.
 4. The appointment of Dhamma-mahamattas reflects an administrative effort to promote welfare and ethical conduct.
- Which of the above statements are correct?
- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4
3. Consider the following channels through which a repo rate hike may affect inflation and growth in India:
1. Interest Rate Channel: Raises funding costs, dampening consumption and investment demand.
 2. Exchange Rate Channel: Can support the currency, reducing imported inflation.
 3. Credit Channel: Can tighten bank lending standards and slow credit expansion.
 4. Fiscal Dominance Channel: Directly forces government spending cuts, thereby lowering inflation mechanically.
- How many of the above are valid transmission channels for repo rate changes?
- (a) Only one
(b) Only two
(c) Only three
(d) All four
4. With reference to the Election Commission of India (ECI), consider the following statements:
1. The ECI's plenary power under Article 324 operates only in areas unoccupied by legislation and is subject to existing laws made by Parliament/State Legislatures.
 2. The Model Code of Conduct is enforceable at all times, including between elections, as a permanent legal code.
 3. In non-election periods, the ECI's role includes recognition of political parties and allotment of symbols as per applicable rules/orders.
 4. The ECI can disqualify an MP/MLA on grounds of defection during elections if it finds MCC violations.
- Which of the above statements are correct?
- (a) 1 and 3 only
(b) 1, 2 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 4 only
(d) 1, 3 and 4 only

Answers and Explanations

1. (a) Winter fog persists mainly due to stable inversion, weak surface winds, high humidity, and poor dispersion and not due to strong vertical mixing by STWJ. The Tropical Easterly Jet is primarily a summer monsoon feature; winter upper-level flow over India is dominated by westerlies/STWJ, not TEJ.
2. (a) Dhamma was not executed through monasteries as administrative units; Ashoka used state machinery and officials. Dhamma-mahamattas were imperial functionaries for welfare/ethical oversight, not a monastic apparatus. The “non-sectarian-belief” idea was the key: Dhamma targeted conduct and governance, not sectarian religious expansion.
3. (c) Statement 4 is not a monetary transmission channel: repo changes do not directly compel government expenditure cuts. Monetary policy can affect fiscal outcomes indirectly (e.g., via borrowing costs), but that is not “mechanical spending cuts.” The other three are standard channels: interest rate, exchange rate, and credit (bank lending/financial conditions), influencing demand and inflation.
4. (a) Model Code of Conduct (MCC) operates during election periods (from announcement to completion of election schedule by the ECI) and is not a permanent legal code. Defection disqualification lies with the Speaker/Chairman under the Tenth Schedule, not the ECI; MCC violations invite electoral/administrative action, not defection proceedings. ECI’s party recognition/symbol functions apply beyond elections.
5. (a) Thermohaline circulation is a density-driven overturning that transports heat poleward (e.g., North Atlantic), shaping climates. Winds drive major surface currents/gyres, but THC’s core mechanism is sinking of cold, saline water and compensating flows - hence it redistributes heat and regulates climate. The global overturning circulation results from a combination of surface buoyancy fluxes and wind stress forcing.
6. (a) Later Vedic norms increasingly favoured patriarchy, tightening marriage and sexuality rules; practices like niyoga were not “broadly endorsed” as a general social freedom. Later Vedic texts show increasing ritual control and patriarchal norms, and widow remarriage/niyoga were not uniformly endorsed. Gargi/Maitreyi were exceptional (do not necessarily reflect the position of women in society at large) intellectual figures, not a proxy for the mainstream decline in women’s autonomy and property rights.
7. (c) Statement 3 is incorrect. Private/community land corresponds to a Community Reserve, not a Conservation Reserve. Community Reserves can be declared not only on private/community land but also on Government land where community rights exist. Conservation Reserves are notified on Government-owned land, typically as buffers/corridors around existing PAs. The other statements capture the stricter rights-settlement regime in National Parks and relatively flexible permitted uses in Sanctuaries.
8. (a)
9. (a) Regur is typically poor in nitrogen and phosphorus (often also low in organic matter), even though it can be productive with management. Its key advantage is high moisture retention due to swelling clays (e.g., montmorillonite), supporting cotton and several rabi crops where residual moisture is critical. Although, black soils are primarily suited for cotton; wheat cultivation is region-specific and depends on irrigation/residual moisture conditions.
10. (b) CRISPR is a gene-editing tool; it can create targeted edits without inserting a foreign gene in the final plant (SDN-1/2). India issued an Office Memorandum (OM, dated 30 March 2022) exempting SDN-1/SDN-2 plants free of exogenous DNA from specified provisions of the 1989 Rules. The Office Memorandum specifies exemption subject to confirmation that no exogenous DNA is present in the final product and requires institutional oversight.
11. (a) The lower town was often well-planned with grid layouts, drainage, and regulated streets, implying civic control. Harappan archaeology does not conclusively establish citadels as “royal palace complexes”; evidence points more to public/ritual/storage/administrative functions rather than identifiable monarchic palaces. In reality, function of citadel structures remains debated; e.g., “Great Bath” seen as ritual, but not definitively administrative.
12. (d)
13. (a) The “reasonable” requires more than legality and purpose - courts examine nexus, proportionality, overbreadth/arbitrariness, and the burden on rights. The Supreme Court has explicitly adopted proportionality (including least restrictive means in certain contexts) while testing reasonableness of restrictions. The public order was not an original ground in Article 19(2); it was added by the First Constitutional Amendment (1951), reflecting judicial-legislative evolution after early free-speech rulings.

STATE WATCH

In this section, we have briefly presented the schemes and programs started by various states, meetings and conferences organized at the state level, latest reports released by the state governments and other major developments from which questions are often asked in state-specific competitive examinations.



Uttar Pradesh

Delhi-Meerut Namo Bharat Corridor

- On 22nd February 2026, Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India's first Namu Bharat Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) and dedicated the 82-km Delhi-Meerut Namu Bharat Corridor to the nation.
- The project marks the launch of India's first Regional Rapid Transit System.
- Namu Bharat Rapid Rail and Meerut Metro operate from the same platform.
- Both services run on shared tracks and integrated stations.
- The corridor aims to simplify daily commuting across the NCR.
- Key stations integrate railways, metro services and bus connectivity.
- The system reduces travel time between Delhi and Meerut significantly.
- Many train operators and station staff under the project are women.
- The initiative supports Uttar Pradesh's transformation into a manufacturing hub.

HCL-Foxconn Semiconductor Unit

- On 21st February 2026, Prime Minister virtually laid the foundation stone of the HCL-Foxconn Joint Venture project 'India Chip Pvt. Ltd' in the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority at Jewar in Greater Noida of Uttar Pradesh.
- The project supports India's push for semiconductor self-reliance.
- It is part of the broader India Semiconductor Mission.
- The government has approved 10 semiconductor fabrication and packaging projects.
- Four semiconductor units are expected to begin production soon.
- The Chips to Startup programme aims to train 85,000 professionals.
- Rare Earth Corridors will support semiconductor and battery manufacturing.

- The unit is expected to generate employment and boost local ecosystems.
- Uttar Pradesh accounts for over half of India's mobile phone manufacturing.
- Electronics manufacturing has grown nearly six-fold in the last 11 years.

Jharkhand

'Vanjeevi Didi' Initiative

On 17th February 2026, the South Division of Palamu Tiger Reserve launched the 'Vanjeevi Didi' initiative across 17 villages.

- The initiative aims to train educated women as ambassadors for forest conservation.
- Most participants are graduates or currently pursuing higher education.
- Vanjeevi Didis will motivate families to prevent forest destruction.
- Women are expected to influence households against wildlife crimes.
- Selected participants will receive Rs.3,000 monthly incentive initially for two months.
- Vanjeevi Didis will also support primary education in villages.
- They will share government employment and development information locally.
- The model is inspired by Sakhi Mandals and para-legal volunteers.

Kerala

Kerala Nativity Card Bill

- On 18th February 2026, the Kerala Cabinet approved the Kerala Nativity Card Bill to introduce a Nativity Card based on the existing Nativity Certificate issued by the state.
- The Nativity Card will function as an authoritative document for availing various Kerala government services and social purposes.
- The Tahsildar will be the competent authority to issue the card, while village offices will maintain official registers.

News Notes

In general competitive examinations, a large number of questions are asked from appointments, awards, military exercises, summits & conferences, important days, etc. for which coverage of current events in a concise form is sufficient. Keeping this in mind, we have presented these contemporary developments in a brief form in this section.



Persons in News	
Person	Brief Description
Elon Musk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Became the world's first individual to cross a net worth of USD 800 billion in February 2026. Wealth surged after the SpaceX-xAI merger created a combined entity valued at about USD 1.25 trillion. Estimated personal net worth reached around USD 852 billion, as per Forbes.
Kabak Yano	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 1st February 2026, Indian mountaineer Kabak Yano successfully summited Mount Aconcagua in Argentina, the highest peak in South America and the Western Hemisphere, standing at 22,831 feet. Achievement is part of her 7-Summit Mountaineering Expedition to scale the highest peaks on all seven continents. 27-year-old Indian mountaineer hails from Arunachal Pradesh.
Yumnam Khemchand Singh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 4th February 2026, Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Yumnam Khemchand Singh on being sworn in as the new Chief Minister of Manipur. Deputy Chief Ministers Nemcha Kipgen (from the Kuki community) and Loishi Dikho (from the Naga community) reflect an emphasis on inclusive representation.
Sanae Takaichi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secured a landslide victory in Japan's snap general election on 8th February 2026. Takaichi's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) won 316 out of 465 seats in the lower house, its best-ever performance. With coalition partner Japan Innovation Party (Ishin), the alliance secured 352 seats, crossing the two-thirds supermajority mark.
Narges Mohammadi	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 8th February 2026, Iranian activist and 2023 Nobel Peace Prize winner Narges Mohammadi was sentenced to a new prison term of seven and a half years. The sentence includes six years for "assembly and collusion against national security" and one and a half years for "propaganda against the government." Mohammadi, a long-time campaigner for women's rights and against the death penalty, has been repeatedly imprisoned during her three-decade activism.
Ranvir Sachdeva	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eight-year-old coder Ranvir Sachdeva became the youngest speaker to address the India AI Impact Summit at Bharat Mandapam. He described himself as a technologist and shared his ideas on integrating ancient Indian philosophies with modern Artificial Intelligence (AI). His keynote highlighted India's distinct approach to AI development compared to other nations.
Mia Amor Mottley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 13th February 2026, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Prime Minister Mia Amor Mottley, on her historic third consecutive electoral victory in Barbados. Mottley's Barbados Labour Party (BLP) won all 30 seats available in the lower house of parliament; third clean sweep under her leadership.
Prince Andrew	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 20th February 2026, Prince Andrew was released under investigation, 11 hours after his arrest in connection with allegations linked to Jeffrey Epstein. He was arrested on suspicion of misconduct in public office. The investigation concerns alleged sharing of trade information with Jeffrey Epstein in 2010.

Exam Pointers

Based on February 2026 issues of Yojana and Kurukshetra

In this section, we are presenting a compilation of exam-oriented study material sourced from various magazines published by the Government of India. It has been prepared keeping in mind the exam-specific needs of the candidates.



Yojana

AYUSH: A Strong Step Towards Holistic Health

- In 2024, for which disorders did the AYUSH vertical under the Directorate General of Health Services publish “Standard Treatment Guidelines” (STG)?
– **Six common musculoskeletal disorders**
- In which Indian city has the Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM) been established with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO)?
– **Jamnagar (Gujarat)**
- According to the National Sample Survey (79th Round, 2022–23), what percentage of India’s rural population is aware of AYUSH?
– **95 percent**
- With which institution have the AYUSH research councils been affiliated for studies on public health priorities such as anemia?
– **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)**
- To generate policy-related evidence between AYUSH research and modern medicine, “Advanced Centres” have been established in which four major institutions?
– **AIIMS institutions**
- What is the name of the IT framework developed to ensure digital integration and standardized data collection in the AYUSH sector?
– **AYUSH Grid**
- What is the name of the mobile app developed by the Ministry of AYUSH to reduce workplace stress and promote wellness?
– **Yoga Break(Y-Break)**
- Under the National Education Policy 2020, which AYUSH discipline has been included in the MBBS curriculum?
– **Yoga**

Modern Nutrition Plan for Children’s Good Health

- Which life-cycle framework has been adopted by the Government of India to integrate “Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health” with nutrition?
– **RMNCAH+N**

- According to implementation studies of initiatives like WINGS and RajPusht, improvement in maternal nutrition led to what percentage reduction in low birth weight (LBW)?
– **More than 20 percent**
- According to the National Family Health Survey (NFHS-5), what percentage of children under five in India are categorized as stunted?
– **35.5 percent**
- Through the Kangaroo Mother Care (KMC) technique, neonatal mortality can be reduced by approximately what percentage?
– **32 percent**
- Under the Home-Based Newborn Care (HBNC) program, for how many days does the ASHA worker visit the newborn’s home?
– **Up to 42 days**
- What is the current new name of the world’s largest child development program, the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)?
– **Mission Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0**

Living in Accordance with the Principles and Values of Nature

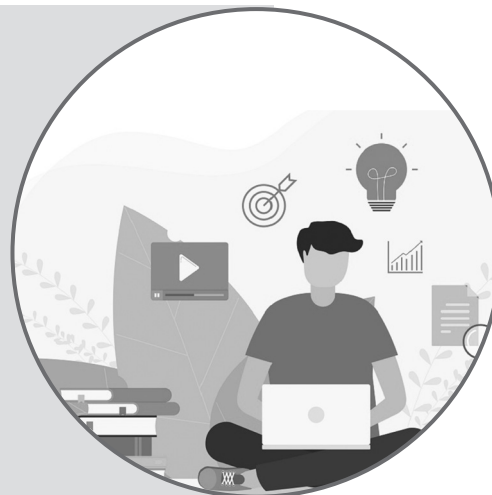
- What is the real name of the environmentalist popularly known as “Peepal Baba”?
– **Swami Prem Parivartan**
- Which institutional environment did Peepal Baba consider the best model for sustainable living and balancing development with greenery?
– **Military cantonment campuses**
- Which country has set a global example in urban planning by placing the “Garden City” concept at the center of its planning?
– **Singapore**

Using Grassroots Innovations for Public Health

- From which Indian plant were the important anti-cancer alkaloids vinblastine and vincristine discovered, locally known as sadabahar or nayantara?
– **Catharanthus roseus**
- Which is India’s leading institution that protects community knowledge and grassroots innovations under Intellectual Property Rights (IPR)?
– **National Innovation Foundation India**

Current Affairs based Model MCQs

Here we have presented current affairs based model MCQs for the upcoming UPSC & State PSCs Prelims and other graduate level examinations.



- Recently, the Ministry of MSME upgraded the National Small Industries Corporation (NSIC) from Schedule 'B' to Schedule 'A' Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE) status. With reference to CPSEs, consider the following statements:**
 - CPSEs are companies in which the direct holding of the Central Government is 51% or more.
 - The Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) classifies CPSEs into three schedules: A, B, and C.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

(a) 1 only (b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2 (d) Neither 1 nor 2
- Recently, smooth-coated otters were documented for the first time in Nandhaur Wildlife Sanctuary. Nandhaur Wildlife Sanctuary is located in which state?**

(a) Himachal Pradesh (b) Sikkim
(c) Uttar Pradesh (d) Uttarakhand
- Recently, it was reported that the Privileges Committee and the Ethics Committee have not been constituted in the Lok Sabha for nearly two years. With reference to the Privileges Committee, consider the following statements:**
 - The Privileges Committee is a quasi-judicial body that safeguards the special rights and immunities of Parliament and its members.
 - The powers and privileges of Parliament and State Legislatures are defined under Articles 105 and 194 of the Constitution of India, respectively.
 - The Privileges Committee of the Lok Sabha consists of 10 members elected by the House.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

(a) Statement-I only
(b) Statement-I and Statement-II only
(c) Statement-II and Statement-III only
(d) All statements are correct
- Recently discovered Galathea balasubramaniani from the coral reefs of Agatti belongs to which type of organism?**

(a) Mollusc (b) Crab
(c) Jellyfish (d) Starfish
- Takeshima, recently in the news over a sovereignty dispute between Japan and South Korea, is located in which body of water?**

(a) East China Sea (b) Sea of Japan
(c) Yellow Sea (d) Philippine Sea
- 18th February, 2026 marked the 80th anniversary of the 1946 Royal Indian Navy (RIN) Revolt, a significant uprising against British colonial rule. With reference to the RIN Revolt, consider the following statements:**
 - The revolt began as a protest by naval ratings over poor service conditions and racial discrimination.
 - The uprising was inspired by trials of the Indian National Army (INA).
 - The revolt continued for more than a month and resulted in the immediate transfer of power from Britain to India.

Which of the above statements is/are correct?

(a) Statement-I only
(b) Statement-I and Statement-II only
(c) Statement-II and Statement-III only
(d) All statements are correct
- Recently, Bengaluru-based startup Sarvam AI launched two indigenous Large Language Models (LLMs), marking a milestone for India's Sovereign AI ambitions. With reference to Large Language Models (LLMs), consider the following statements:**
 - A Large Language Model is a type of Artificial Intelligence trained on vast amounts of text data to understand and generate human language.
 - Large Language Models function without the use of parameters and rely only on manually coded rules.

Sports in News

Based on recent developments
in the world of sports



BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year 2025

On 16th February 2026, Smriti Mandhana was awarded the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year 2025 at a ceremony in New Delhi.

- The award recognised her pivotal role in India's historic Women's World Cup victory in 2025.
- At 29, Mandhana was instrumental in leading India to a landmark triumph in women's cricket.
- She described 2025 as a "special year for women's cricket" in a video message from Australia, where she is currently touring.

FIDE Freestyle Chess World Championship

On 15th February 2026, Magnus Carlsen of Norway won the first official FIDE Freestyle Chess World Championship, defeating Fabiano Caruana of the USA 2.5–1.5 in the final at Weissenhaus, Germany.

- A draw in the fourth and final game was enough for Carlsen to clinch the title.
- The victory marks Carlsen's 21st world title across different chess formats and his first official FIDE-recognised title in the Freestyle (Chess960) format.

Asian Rifle/Pistol Championship 2026

In February 2026, India finished at the top of the medal table at the Asian Rifle/Pistol Championship 2026 held at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range, New Delhi.

- **India's Overall Medal Tally:** 51 Gold, 23 Silver, and 20 Bronze [Total: 94 Medals].
- On the final day, Indian shooters secured 6 gold, 3 silver and 4 bronze medals.

Asian Indoor Athletics Championships 2026

On 8th February 2026, Tejaswin Shankar won a historic gold medal in the men's heptathlon at the Asian Indoor Athletics Championships in Tianjin, China. He secured the top position with a record-breaking 5,993 points.

- The performance set a new national indoor record, surpassing his previous best of 5,650 points achieved in 2021.
- This was India's only gold medal at the championship.
- India finished the tournament with a total of five medals and secured sixth place in the overall standings.
- China topped the chart with 34 medals (10 gold, 11 silver and 13 bronze).

India Wins SAFF U-19 Women's Championship 2026

On 7th February 2026, India defeated Bangladesh 4–0 in the final of the SAFF U-19 Women's Championship at Pokhara Rangasala Stadium, Nepal.

- India delivered a dominant performance to clinch the title in emphatic fashion.
- Captain Julan Nongmaithem opened the scoring, followed by goals from Elizabeth Lakra, Pearl Fernandes and substitute Anwita Raghuraman.
- India controlled possession, pressed aggressively and prevented Bangladesh from mounting a comeback.
- The victory was particularly significant as Bangladesh had defeated India earlier in the round-robin stage.

Jharkhand Wins Gold at Para Throwball National Federation Cup 2026

Jharkhand's women's team won the gold medal at the Para Throwball National Federation Cup 2026, held at the Singhania University campus in Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan, from 3 to 5 February 2026.

- In the women's final, Jharkhand defeated Rajasthan with a scoreline of 21-17.
- The team displayed composure, tactical discipline and consistency in both attack and defence.
- The closely contested match reflected Jharkhand's ability to perform under pressure against the home team.
- The victory highlights Jharkhand's growing excellence in para sports and commitment to inclusive sporting development.

Devika Sihag Wins Thailand Masters 2026 Title

On 1st February 2026, 20-year-old Devika Sihag from Haryana won her first BWF Super 300 title at the Thailand Masters 2026, marking a major milestone in Indian badminton.

- Devika captured national attention with her breakthrough victory in women's singles.
- In the final, she was leading 21-8, 6-3 against Goh Jin Wei before her opponent retired due to a hamstring injury.
- The match highlighted Devika's aggressive stroke play, strong net control and composure under pressure.
- Her consistent performances throughout the tournament confirmed her emergence as a rising star in Indian women's badminton. ■■

Info Bytes

From Govt. News Services
like PIB, AIR, etc.



- What is the name of the nationwide campaign recently inaugurated to promote stronger public healthcare?
- **Saving Lives and Building a Healthier Bharat**
- Where did the 16th edition of Exercise VAJRA PRAHAR commence on 24th February 2026?
- **Bakloh, Himachal Pradesh**
- What is the name of India's comprehensive National Counter-Terrorism Policy recently launched by the Ministry of Home Affairs?
- **PRAHAAR**
- Whose bust was recently unveiled by President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan?
- **Chakravarti Rajagopalachari**
- Where was the sixth edition of the Khelo India Winter Games recently inaugurated?
- **Gulmarg**
- Which organisation recently awarded the 'Eat Right Station' certification to 5 Northeast Frontier Railway stations?
- **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)**
- Which Indian film recently won the Best Children's & Family Film award at the BAFTA Awards?
- **Boong**
- Which authority recently issued notices to six e-commerce platforms for listing restricted drone and GPS jammers?
- **Central Consumer Protection Authority**
- Who recently received the CEO of the Year® Award for the second consecutive year?
- **Sameer Kanodia**
- Which renowned Bengali writer recently passed away in Kolkata at the age of 92?
- **Mani Sankar Mukhopadhyay**
- How many new interventions were recently launched under the Export Promotion Mission to strengthen MSME participation in global trade?
- **Seven**
- What is the name of the declaration recently signed by India and the United States at the India AI Impact Summit to strengthen semiconductor and AI collaboration?
- **Pax Silica Declaration**
- Which Indian state made its debut at BIOFACH 2026 in Nuremberg, Germany, as an emerging organic sourcing destination?
- **Meghalaya**
- What is the name of the portal launched by the Assam government to streamline provincialisation of venture educational institutions?
- **Provincialisation Management System (PMS) Portal**
- Which company recently announced a \$15 billion investment over 5 years under the "America-India Connect" initiative at the India AI Impact Summit 2026?
- **Google**
- Which organisation recently signed an MoU with the World Food Programme to supply 2 lakh metric tonnes of rice for global humanitarian operations?
- **Food Corporation of India**
- Which company recently signed an MoU with the Bihar government to set up a Core Development Centre and an AI Centre of Excellence in Patna?
- **Corporate Infotech Private Limited**
- Which mission was the focus of the 6th District Collectors' Peyjal Samvad organised by the Ministry of Jal Shakti?
- **Jal Jeevan Mission**
- Which organisation recently announced the development of "Bee Corridors" along national highways to support pollinator conservation?
- **National Highways Authority of India**
- Which two new army ant species were recently discovered in the Eastern Ghats of Andhra Pradesh?
- **Aenictus chittoorensis and Aenictus lankamallensis**
- Which scheme was launched to provide cashless medical treatment to road accident victims across India?
- **PM RAHAT**
- Who was recently appointed Chairman of Gujarat International Finance Tec-City Company Limited?
- **Uday Kotak**
- The Bharat Bodhan AI Conclave, held on 12-13 February 2026 in New Delhi, was organised by which ministry?
- **Ministry of Education**
- The Quality Assurance (QA)-Industry Conclave themed "Traceability, Speed and Trust: Leveraging Technology for Smarter Quality Assurance" was held in which city on 13th February 2026?
- **New Delhi ■■**