

# CURRENT AFFAIRS

WEEKLY

WEEK: 4  
DECEMBER  
2023

## MAINS

**GS- I** ■ CHILD GROWTH STANDARDS IN INDIA

■ PROBLEMS RELATED TO PENINSULAR RIVER BASINS IN INDIA

**GS- II** ■ MODERNISATION OF INDIA-ASEAN FTA

■ SUPREME COURT RULES THAT TRIBUNALS CANNOT DIRECT GOVERNMENT TO FRAME POLICY

**GS- III** ■ ALL-INDIA CONSUMER PRICE INDEX NUMBERS FOR AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL LABOURERS

■ INDIA SKILLS REPORT 2024

■ THE UNITED STATES' AND CLIMATE RESPONSE

■ JAPAN' SLIM LANDER ON MOON

## PRELIMS

### HISTORY

■ Veer Baal Diwas

### POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

- Competition Commission of India (Determination of Turnover or Income) Regulations, 2023
- Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of

Service and Term of Office) Bill, 2023 passed in Lok Sabha

■ Lok Sabha passes Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill

■ PM JANMAN

### ENVIRONMENT

■ India's Winter Arctic Research

### SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

■ Milli-second burst detected by AstroSat

## NEWS IN SHORT

- Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) Association (IEA) Conference
- Physical Training Instructor (PTI) designated as a 'Teacher'
- Black Tiger
- China bans export of rare earth processing technologies
- Red giant flying squirrel (*Petaurista petaurista*)
- 106th Indian Economic
- Fimbristylis jaleeliana
- Volcano Fagradalsfjall

## SPECIALS

■ Healthcare Sector in India

**GS SCORE**

An Institute for Civil Services

[www.iasscore.in](http://www.iasscore.in)

## — Disclaimer —

The current affairs articles are segregated from prelims and mains perspective, such separation is maintained in terms of structure of articles. Mains articles have more focus on analysis and prelims articles have more focus on facts.

However, this doesn't mean that Mains articles don't cover facts and PT articles can't have analysis. You are suggested to read all of them for all stages of examination.

# CONTENTS

## WEEK - 4 (DECEMBER, 2023)

Section - A: MAINS CURRENT AFFAIRS			
	Area of GS	Topics in News	Page No.
GS I	SOCIETY	• Child Growth Standards in India	02
	GEOGRAPHY	• Problems related to peninsular River basins in India	02
GS II	INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS	• Modernisation of India-ASEAN FTA	04
	POLITY & GOVERNANCE	• Supreme Court rules that tribunals cannot direct government to frame policy	05
GS III	ECONOMY	• All-India Consumer Price Index Numbers for Agricultural and Rural Labourers	07
		• India Skills Report 2024	08
	ENVIRONMENT	• The United States' and climate response	09
	SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	• Japan' Slim lander on Moon	10
Section - B: SPECIAL			
	Area of GS	Topics in News	Page No.
GS II	POLITY AND GOVERNANCE	• Healthcare Sector in India	14
Section - C: PRELIMS CURRENT AFFAIRS			
	Area of GS	Topics in News	Page No.
GS I	HISTORY	• Veer Baal Diwas	18
GS II	POLITY AND GOVERNANCE	• Competition Commission of India (Determination of Turnover or Income) Regulations, 2023	18
		• Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Bill, 2023 passed in Lok Sabha	18
		• Lok Sabha passes Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill	20
		• PM JANMAN	20

# GS SCORE

An Institute for Civil Services

At **GS SCORE**, we embody quality education through latest pedagogy, personalized attention for an empowered learning experience.

**EXCELLENCE & EMPOWERMENT**  
are our **guiding principles**.

## COURSES *for* IAS 2025-26



### GS FOUNDATION



### OPTIONAL FOUNDATION

- POL. SCIENCE
- ANTHROPOLOGY
- SOCIOLOGY
- LAW
- HISTORY
- GEOGRAPHY
- PUB. AD.



### MAINS CLASSES



### TEST SERIES

- PRELIMS TEST SERIES
- MAINS TEST SERIES
- INTEGRATED TEST SERIES
- OPTIONAL TEST SERIES



I am highly obliged towards GS SCORE for its best evaluation and assessment mechanism which helped me to crack UPSC in first attempt.

**YASHARTH SHEKHAR (AIR 12, 2021)**



I am very thankful to GS Score for realizing my dreams into reality. The well-crafted all India Test Series helped me a lot and augmented my score significantly.

**APALA MISHRA (AIR-9, 2020)**

## THE MOST **EXPERIENCED & SEASONED** SUBJECT EXPERTS



**IASSCOREofficial**



**gsscoreofficial**



**gsscoreofficial**



**gsscoreofficial**



**iasscore**



**gsscoreofficial/**



For Information, Contact **8448496262** | Website: **<https://iasscore.in/>**

<b>GS III</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENT</b>	• India's Winter Arctic Research	21
	<b>SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY</b>	• Milli-second burst detected by AstroSat	21
<b>Section - D: SHORT NEWS</b>			
<b>Area of GS</b>		<b>Topics in News</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
<b>INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS</b>		• Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)	24
<b>POLITY AND GOVERNANCE</b>		• Physical Training Instructor (PTI) designated as a 'Teacher'	24
<b>ECONOMY</b>		• China bans export of rare earth processing technologies	24
		• 106th Indian Economic Association (IEA) Conference	25
<b>SPECIES IN NEWS</b>			
• Black Tiger			25
• Red giant flying squirrel (Petaurista petaurista)			26
• Fimbristylis jaleeliana			27
<b>LOCATION IN NEWS</b>			
• Volcano Fagradalsfjall			27



An Institute for Civil Services

# PRELIMS Qualifier 2024

## MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

for

## PRELIMS

{Daily Test}

01

45+ Mentorship Sessions  
(Pre & Post Tests) based  
on 33 Prelims Tests

01

Detailed Discussion of  
the Tests

01

Daily Preparation Target  
with strict schedule (No  
Flexi Format)

01

6 Weekly Revision Tests  
and 6 Subject Revision  
Tests

01

Prelims Mock Test Series  
(20 Tests) for All India  
Ranking & Performance  
Analysis

Scan QR Code  
for more information



**PROGRAMME FEE**  
**₹ 10,000 +GST**



**8448496262**



**iascore.in**

## ***Section A*** [MAINS]

- ☞ Child Growth Standards in India
- ☞ Problems related to peninsular River basins in India
- ☞ Modernisation of India-ASEAN FTA
- ☞ Supreme Court rules that tribunals cannot direct government to frame policy
- ☞ All-India Consumer Price Index Numbers for Agricultural and Rural Labourers
- ☞ India Skills Report 2024
- ☞ The United States' and climate response
- ☞ Japan' Slim lander on Moon



## CHILD GROWTH STANDARDS IN INDIA

**Context:** The issue of child under nutrition persists in India, with multiple determinants such as food intake, dietary diversity, health, sanitation, and poverty.

- ◆ The measurement of **childhood under nutrition** relies on anthropometric standards, and India currently uses the **World Health Organization (WHO) Growth Standards**. However, there is an on-going debate regarding the **appropriateness of these standards** for the Indian context.

### Background:

- ◆ The WHO standards are derived from the **Multicentre Growth Reference Study (MGRS)**, conducted in six countries between 1997 and 2003.
- ◆ Critics argue that the **MGRS sample, particularly in India, was drawn from privileged households in South Delhi**, potentially skewing the standards.

### Need:

- ◆ Monitoring **child growth is essential for tracking progress**, but concerns have been raised about the suitability of the WHO standards in the Indian context.
- ◆ The **determinants of under nutrition** are multifaceted, and a nuanced approach is required.

### Comparison of Two Standards:

- ◆ Critics contend that the WHO standards **overestimate under nutrition** in India.
- ◆ However, comparing these standards with other datasets is challenging due to **issues of inequality and sample representation**.
- ◆ The MGRS included **counselling, absent in national surveys**, influencing the comparability of results.

### Analysis:

- ◆ Genetic growth potential and maternal height significantly influence **child growth**.
- ◆ Questions arise about the **adaptability of the standards to diverse genetic profiles** and whether improvement is achievable in one generation.
- ◆ **Regional variations** within India and the shifting gene pools with socio-economic development further complicate the analysis.

### Issues/Challenges:

- ◆ Concerns exist regarding the **potential misdiagnosis of under nutrition**, leading to overfeeding and an increase in non-communicable diseases.
- ◆ However, **addressing dietary gaps, improving meal quality** in government programs, and enhancing overall healthcare access are crucial to effective nutritional interventions.

### Possible Suggestions:

- ◆ The **Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)** has formed a committee to revisit growth references for India.
- ◆ The committee recommends a **thorough nationwide study to formulate national growth charts**, if necessary.
- ◆ While acquiring precise information is valuable, **maintaining comparability with international standards, as suggested by the WHO-MGRS**, remains essential.

### Conclusion

- ◆ As India aspires for **comprehensive development by 2047**, the focus on child growth standards gains significance. Striking a **balance between aspirational goals and achievable standards** is crucial. The on-going discussions about revising growth references underscore the need for a nuanced approach that considers **regional variations, socio-economic factors, and international benchmarks** to ensure effective child nutrition strategies in India.



## PROBLEMS RELATED TO PENINSULAR RIVER BASINS IN INDIA

**Context:** A recent study published in the **American Meteorological Society's Journal of Hydrometeorology** sheds light on the heightened risk of widespread flooding in river basins across peninsular India compared to the Ganga and Brahmaputra.

### About:

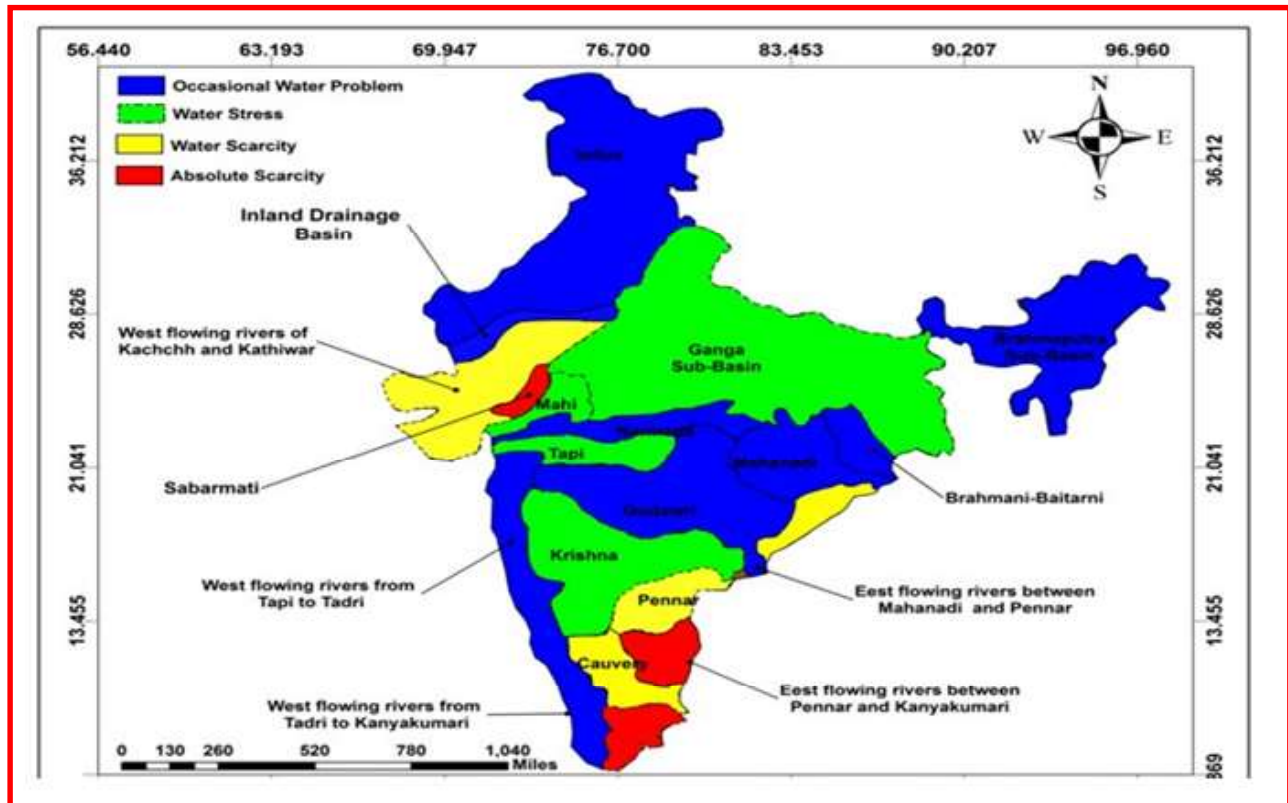
- ◆ Also, the research, conducted by the **Indian Institute of Technology Gandhinagar**, emphasizes the need to shift focus from localized flooding to understanding the occurrence and drivers of widespread floods.



## Probability of Widespread Flooding:

### ◆ Narmada Basin Takes the Lead:

- ▶ The **Narmada basin** stands out with the **highest probability (59%)** of experiencing widespread flooding.
- ▶ Followed by **Mahanadi (50%)**, **Godavari (42%)**, **Krishna (38%)**, and **Cauvery (19%)**.



### ◆ Transboundary River Basins

- ▶ **Ganga and Brahmaputra** show probabilities of **21% and 18%**, respectively, for widespread flooding.

## Occurrence and Frequency Analysis

### ◆ Frequency of Widespread Floods

- ▶ **Mahanadi and Narmada river basins have the highest frequency**, with 40 events during the period of 1959-2020.
- ▶ **Krishna and Godavari basins witnessed over 20 widespread floods**, while Ganga, Brahmaputra, and Cauvery basins experienced less than 15 events.

### ◆ Seasonal Trends

- ▶ Strong seasonal trends are observed in widespread flood probability.
- ▶ Summer monsoon season sees flooding in all seven river basins (except Cauvery) with August being a critical month.
- ▶ Godavari, Mahanadi, and Narmada basins record flooding in July, August, and September.

### ◆ Seasonality Linked to Rainfall

- ▶ The **core monsoon region** (Godavari, Mahanadi, and Narmada) receives more rainy days in July to September.
- ▶ Cauvery faces flooding in October-December due to northeast monsoon season.

## Drivers of Widespread Flooding

### ◆ Atmospheric Rivers and Global Examples

- ▶ The study associates widespread floods with large atmospheric circulations.
- ▶ Examples include the 2018 Kerala floods, 2022 Pakistan floods, and lower Mississippi river floods (2008, 2011, 2015–19), linked to atmospheric rivers transporting moisture from tropics to extratropics.

### ◆ Impact of Climate Change

- ▶ Widespread flooding drivers are expected to change in timing, occurrence, and probability in a warming climate.

**Atmospheric Rivers:**

- Atmospheric rivers are relatively long, narrow regions in the atmosphere – **like rivers in the sky** – that transport **most of the water vapour outside of the tropics**.
- Atmospheric River Formation:
  - ▶ Atmospheric rivers usually begin over tropical regions. Warm temperatures cause ocean water to evaporate and rise into the atmosphere. Strong winds help to carry the water vapour through the atmosphere.
  - ▶ As atmospheric rivers move over land, the water vapour rises up farther into the atmosphere. It then cools into water droplets, which fall as precipitation.
- **Impacts:**
  - ▶ Heavy rainfall associated with ARs can cause **flooding, landslides and mudslides**.
  - ▶ They can also lead to water supply disruption, and develop drought-like conditions.

## The science behind atmospheric rivers

An atmospheric river (AR) is a flowing column of condensed water vapor in the atmosphere responsible for producing significant levels of rain and snow, especially in the Western United States. When ARs move inland and sweep over the mountains, the water vapor rises and cools to create heavy precipitation. Though many ARs are weak systems that simply provide beneficial rain or snow, some of the larger, more powerful ARs can create extreme rainfall and floods capable of disrupting travel, inducing mudslides and causing catastrophic damage to life and property. Visit [www.research.noaa.gov](http://www.research.noaa.gov) to learn more.

A strong AR transports an amount of water vapor roughly equivalent to 7.5–15 times the average flow of water at the mouth of the Mississippi River.

ARs are a primary feature in the entire global water cycle and are tied closely to both water supply and flood risks, particularly in the Western U.S.

On average, about 30-50% of annual precipitation on the West Coast occurs in just a few AR events and contributes to the water supply — and flooding risk.

ARs move with the weather and are present somewhere on Earth at any given time.

ARs are approximately 250–375 miles wide on average.

Scientists' improved understanding of ARs has come from roughly a decade of scientific studies that use observations from satellites, radar and aircraft as well as the latest numerical weather models. More studies are underway, including a 2015 scientific mission that added data from instruments aboard a NOAA ship.

3/2015

Image not to scale.

**Way Forward: Research and Adaptation**

- ◆ **Research on flooding Pattern:** The research underscores the **urgent need for a comprehensive understanding of widespread flooding patterns** in Indian River basins, providing crucial insights for effective flood management strategies.
- ◆ **Flood Risk Adaptation:** As climate change continues, **adapting to evolving flood risks** becomes imperative for safeguarding vulnerable regions from the devastating impacts of widespread floods.



### MODERNISATION OF INDIA-ASEAN FTA

4

**Context:** India and the 10-member ASEAN nations is going to conduct a review

meeting of the existing free trade agreement (FTA) and discuss ways to make the pact more 'modern' and address needs of present times.

- ◆ A delegation comprising key officials from ASEAN nations will visit New Delhi to begin the negotiations.

**About:**

- ◆ **Background:**
  - ▶ The **Free Trade agreement** was signed in August 2009 and enforced from 2010.
- ◆ Now the new areas such as labour, environment, SMEs and gender are likely to be kept out in the pact for modernisation.
- ◆ The first round of negotiations for reviewing the FTA, officially known as the ASEAN India Trade in Goods

Agreement (AITGA), will be on February 18-19 in New Delhi.

### Highlights of the modernising ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITGA):

- ◆ **ROO Modification for Market Access:**
  - ▶ Modernizing the **ASEAN-India Trade in Goods Agreement (AITGA)** involves changes in Rules of Origin (ROO).
  - ▶ Introduction of **Preferential Specific Rules (PSRs)** in the ROO chapter aims to relax rules for select items, boosting India's exports.
  - ▶ PSRs can also prevent potential re-routing of Chinese goods through ASEAN nations, strengthening India's market position.
- ◆ **Chapter on Trade Remedies:**
  - ▶ The revamped AITGA will include a dedicated chapter on trade remedies.
  - ▶ This chapter aims to safeguard domestic industries by providing mechanisms to counteract unfair trading practices or unexpected surges in imported goods.
  - ▶ Trade remedies act as a safety net, ensuring protection for domestic industries against adverse impacts of global trade dynamics.
- ◆ **Exclusion of New Areas to Ensure Focus:**
  - ▶ The modernization effort will not introduce new areas like **environment, labour, MSMEs, or gender** into the AITGA.
  - ▶ The decision is driven by the goal of avoiding complexity and maintaining the pact's focus on enhancing efficiency.
  - ▶ Prioritizing the improvement of existing provisions reflects a strategic approach to streamline the free trade agreement without introducing additional complexities.
- ◆ **Efficiency Enhancement as Primary Goal:**
  - ▶ The overarching objective of AITGA revamping is to enhance the efficiency of the existing trade pact.
  - ▶ Instead of expanding into new areas, the focus is on **refining and optimizing** the current framework for a more effective trade relationship between ASEAN nations and India.
  - ▶ This strategic approach aligns with the goal of ensuring the AITGA remains a streamlined and impactful instrument for fostering economic cooperation.

### Significance of Trade with ASEAN:

- ◆ The ten-member ASEAN, which includes **Indonesia,**

**Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia,** accounted for **11.3 per cent of India's global trade in 2022-23.**

- ◆ **Security:** ASEAN and India are working towards establishing rules-based security architecture in the region, which contrasts China's aggressive policies.
  - ▶ They also collaborate to counter terrorism, violent extremism, and transnational crimes.
- ◆ **Cultural connections:** India shares deep cultural and historical connections with ASEAN countries.
  - ▶ The spread of **Hinduism and Buddhism** to Southeast Asia from India and the influence of Indian languages on the region's scripts are some examples of the cultural connection between the two regions.

### SUPREME COURT RULES THAT TRIBUNALS CANNOT DIRECT GOVERNMENT TO FRAME POLICY

**Context:** Recently, the Supreme Court (SC) has clarified that tribunals functioning under the strict parameters of their governing legislations cannot direct the government to make policy.

### About the Judgment:

- ◆ The top court was deciding on whether the **Armed Forces Tribunal (AFT)** could have directed the government to make a policy to fill up the **post of Judge Advocate General (Air)**.
- ◆ AFT is vested with the powers of a civil court and the Tribunal did not have the powers of the **Supreme Court or the High Courts**.

### What are Tribunals?

- ◆ A tribunal is a quasi-judicial institution that deals with the resolution of disputes pertaining to administration, taxation, environment, securities, etc.
- ◆ Tribunals in India are adjudicatory bodies that serve as an alternative to the traditional court system.
- ◆ Tribunals were established to provide **swift, cost-effective, and decentralized resolution** of disputes across various issues.
- ◆ It performs a number of functions like adjudicating disputes, determining rights between contesting parties, making an administrative decision, reviewing an existing administrative decision, and so forth.



### Why they are formed?

Some of the salient features of tribunals in India are;

- ◆ **Principles of natural justice:** Tribunals in India follow the principle of natural justice, which requires that all parties to a legal proceeding be given a fair and impartial hearing and that no person should be a judge in their own cause.
- ◆ **Not bound by Civil Procedure Code (CPC):** Unlike traditional courts, they are not bound by the strict rules of procedure and evidence set out in the CPC.
- ◆ **Subject expertise:** A significant part of tribunals is comprised of members who have specialized expertise in the subject matter over which they have jurisdiction.
- ◆ **Quasi-judicial powers:** Tribunals can hear evidence, examine witnesses, make findings of fact, apply the law to the facts, and make binding decisions.
- ◆ **Appellate authority:** The decisions of tribunals can be appealed to a higher court. The decision of

tribunals in the first instance can be appealed to the appellate authority and, later, to the High Courts and/or Supreme Court.

- ◆ **Time-bound resolution:** The adjudicatory process in tribunals is usually faster than the traditional court system, which helps resolve disputes more quickly and efficiently.

### Constitutional and legal provisions pertaining to Tribunals in India:

- ◆ The original Constitution did not contain provisions with respect to tribunals. The **42nd Amendment Act of 1976** added a new **Part XIV-A** to the Constitution. This part is titled '**Tribunals**' and consists of only two Articles–
  - **Article 323A** dealing with administrative tribunals and
  - **Article 323B** dealing with tribunals for other matters.

Provision	Description
<b>Article 323A</b>	Empowers the Parliament to provide for the establishment of administrative tribunals for the adjudication of disputes relating to recruitment and conditions of service of persons appointed to public services of the Centre, the states, local bodies, public corporations, and other public authorities.
<b>Article 323B</b>	Empowers the <b>Parliament and state legislatures</b> to set up tribunals for various matters like Industrial and labour, Foreign exchange, import and export, Land reforms, Food, The ceiling on urban property, Elections to Parliament and state legislatures, Rent and tenancy rights, etc.
<b>Administrative Tribunals Act, 1985</b>	In relation to <b>Article 323 A</b> , The Parliament enacted the <b>Administrative Tribunals Act</b> in 1985, which empowers the Central government to establish the Central Administrative Tribunal and state-level administrative tribunals. This Act opened a new chapter in the sphere of providing speedy and inexpensive justice to the aggrieved public servants.

### New rules for tribunals passed in 2020:

- ◆ The '**Tribunal, Appellate Tribunal, and other Authorities (Qualifications, Experience and other Conditions of Service of Members) Rules, 2020**' were framed by the Ministry of Finance in exercising powers under Section 184 of the Finance Act 2017.
- ◆ These rules replace the 2017 Rules, which were struck down by the Supreme Court, which directed the government to re-formulate the rules in conformity with the principles delineated by the court.
- ◆ **Provisions of the New Rules:**
  - These apply to **19 Tribunals**, including **Central Administrative Tribunals, Income Tax Appellate Tribunal, Customs, Excise, Service Tax Appellate Tribunals, etc.**

- **Foreigners Tribunals** are not covered.
- **Appointment:** Appointments to the above Tribunals will be made by Central Government on the recommendations of the "**Search cum Selection Committee**" composed of
  - The Chief Justice of India (CJI) or a judge nominated by the CJI
  - President/chairperson of the concerned tribunal
  - Two government secretaries from the concerned ministry/department.
- **Removal:** The search Cum Selection Committee has the power to recommend the removal of a member and also to conduct inquiries into allegations of misconduct by a member.
- **Qualifications for tribunal members:** Only

persons having judicial or legal experience are eligible for appointment.

- ▶ **Term:** Rules also provide a fixed term of four years to the Tribunal members.
- ▶ **Independence:** The condition in the 2017 Rules (which were set aside by Court) that the members will be eligible for re-appointment has also been dropped in the 2020 Rules.

### What are the restrictions for Tribunals in India?

#### Jurisdiction of Tribunals:

- ◆ **Specialized Areas:** Tribunals typically have jurisdiction over specific areas of law, such as employment, tax, environment, or administrative law.
- ◆ **Statutory Grant:** Their authority is derived from statutes that establish them; outlining the types of cases they can hear and decide.
- ◆ **Limited Appellate Jurisdiction:** Some tribunals have limited appellate jurisdiction, reviewing decisions made by lower-level tribunals or administrative bodies.

#### Restrictions on Tribunals:

- ◆ **Limited Jurisdiction:** Tribunals have jurisdiction within their specified areas and cannot exceed their statutory authority.
- ◆ **Procedural Constraints:** They must adhere to procedural **rules and guidelines** outlined in the governing statute.
- ◆ **Appeal Mechanism:** Decisions of tribunals may be subject to appeal, ensuring a check on potential errors and maintaining fairness.

### ALL-INDIA CONSUMER PRICE INDEX NUMBERS FOR AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL LABOURERS

**Context:** The All-India Consumer Price Index Number for Agricultural Labourers and Rural Labourers (Base: 1986-87=100) for the month of November, 2023 has been released.

#### Key Highlights –

- ◆ **Agricultural Labourers:** Increased by 12 points to reach 1253.
- ◆ **Rural Labourers:** Increased by 11 points to stand at 1262.

- ◆ **Contribution Factors:** Major contributor, accounting for 10.85 and 10.50 points in Agricultural and Rural Labourers' indices, driven by price hikes in rice, wheat, pulses, onion, turmeric whole, garlic, mixed spices, etc.

#### Who maintains Consumer Price Index in India?

In India, there are **four consumer price index numbers**, which are calculated, and these are as follows:

- CPI for Industrial Workers (IW)
- CPI for Agricultural Labourers (AL)
- CPI for Rural Labourers (RL)
- CPI for Urban Non-Manual Employees (UNME)
- The **Ministry of Statistics and Program Implementation** collects **CPI (UNME)** data and compiles it.
- The remaining three (**CPI-IW, CPI-AL, CPI-RL**) are collected by the **Labour Bureau in the Ministry of Labour**.

#### ◆ Regional Trends:

- ▶ Upward trend observed in all states, except West Bengal (decreased indices for both CPI-AL and CPI-RL) and Himachal Pradesh (CPI-AL index decreased).

#### ◆ State-wise Breakdown (Agricultural Labourers):

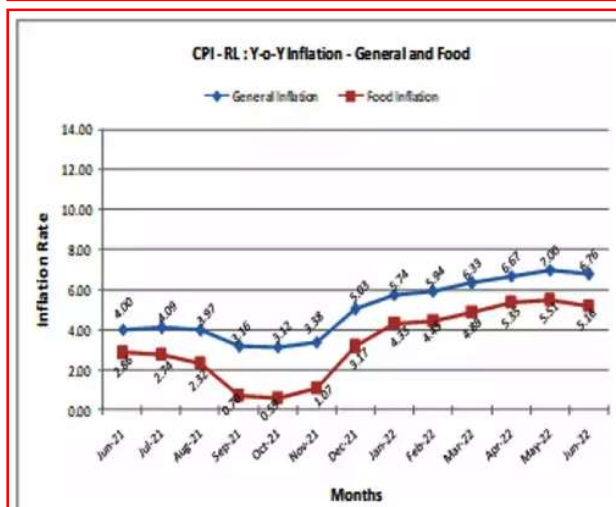
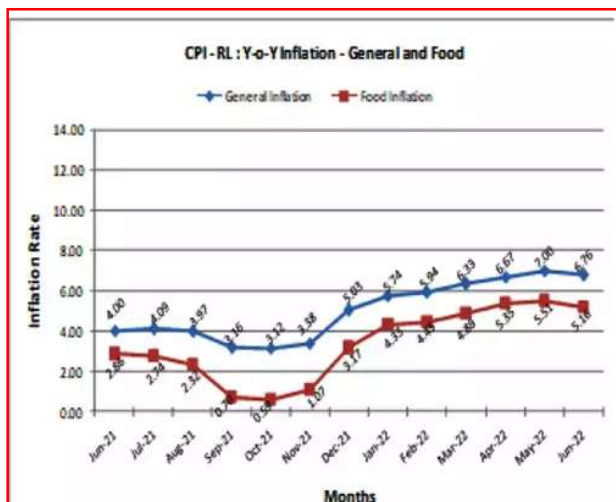
- ▶ Increase of 1 to 10 points in 11 states.
- ▶ Increase of 11 to 20 points in 4 states.
- ▶ Increase of more than 20 points in 3 states.
- ▶ Tamil Nadu tops with 1453 points, while Himachal Pradesh is at the bottom with 958 points.

#### ◆ State-wise Breakdown (Rural Labourers):

- ▶ Increase of 1 to 10 points in 11 states.
- ▶ Increase of 11 to 20 points in 5 states.
- ▶ Increase of more than 20 points in 3 states.
- ▶ Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu lead with 1439 points each; Himachal Pradesh is at the bottom with 1015 points.

#### ◆ Maximum State Increases:

- ▶ **CPI-AL:** Maharashtra experienced the highest increase of 27 points, driven by price hikes in jowar, rice, wheat, atta, tapioca, arhar dal, onion, and sugar.
- ▶ **CPI-RL:** Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu saw the maximum increase of 24 points each, mainly due to rising prices of rice, jowar, ragi, fish, fresh, onion, arhar dal, vegetables, and fruits.



#### ◆ Point-to-Point Inflation Rates (November 2023):

- ▶ **CPI-AL:** 7.37%, compared to 7.08% in October and 6.87% during the same month last year.
- ▶ **CPI-RL:** 7.13%, compared to 6.92% in October and 6.99% during the same month last year.

#### ◆ Food Inflation Rates (November 2023):

- ◆ **9.38% for CPI-AL**, compared to **8.42% in October** and 6.19% during the same month last year.
- ◆ **9.14% for CPI-RL**, compared to **8.18% in October** and 6.05% during the same month last year.



## INDIA SKILLS REPORT 2024

**Context:** Kerala has emerged the most preferred State to work in the India Skills Report 2024.

8

### About the report-

- ◆ It has been compiled by trade bodies, companies, educational institutions, and others.

- ▶ These include CII, AICTE, AIU, Sunstone, Pearson, AWS and the Economic Times.

- ◆ The **11th edition of the India Skills Report (ISR)** has involved 3.88 lakh candidates who undertook the **Wheebox National Employability Test (WNET)** across India.
- ◆ The report draws insights from 152 corporations spanning over 15 diverse industries, all of whom participated in the Early Career Edition of the India Hiring Intent Survey for 2024.

### Key Highlights-

- ◆ **Kerala** emerges as the **most preferred state to work in**, according to the India Skills Report 2024.
- ◆ **Kochi and Thiruvananthapuram** secure **second and fourth positions** among cities favored by both men and women, irrespective of age.
- ◆ **Employability Rankings:** Kerala secures the second position in overall employability among the 18-21 age group, highlighting its robust talent pool.
  - ▶ The state's balanced approach to education and emphasis on future skills contribute to its strong employability standing.
- ◆ **Government Initiatives Recognition:** The report acknowledges the Kerala government's robust initiatives in skill training and development.
  - ▶ ASAP Kerala's impact in imparting skills to over 2.5 lakh higher secondary students is lauded, along with the recognition of community skill parks and centers of excellence as exemplary models for training in advanced technologies nationwide.

### Factors Contributing to Kerala's Top Position in India's Skill Report

#### ◆ Educational Approach:

- ▶ **Balanced Education:** Kerala is credited for maintaining a balanced approach towards education, fostering a holistic learning environment.

#### ◆ Employability Metrics:

- ▶ **Overall Employability:** Secures the second position in overall employability among the 18-21 age groups, showcasing a robust talent pool.
- ▶ **National Employability Test:** The report, based on a National Employability Test, indicates that 51.25% of assessed youths in Kerala possess the required skills.

#### ◆ Skill Excellence:

- ▶ **Computer Skills:** Thiruvananthapuram leads in nurturing computer skills, contributing to Kerala's third position overall among states for computer skills.

#### ◆ Diverse Skill Sets:

- ▶ Versatile Talent Pool: Kerala's diverse skill sets enable it to perform well across different skills, meeting the multifaceted demands of an evolving job market.

#### ◆ Urban Employment Trends:

- ▶ Non-Major Urban Centers: Cities like Thiruvananthapuram challenge the conventional notion that employability is confined to major urban centers, indicating a broader dispersion of talent.

#### ◆ Government Initiatives:

- ▶ Skill Training Programs: Robust initiatives by the Kerala government, including ASAP Kerala, impact skill training by reaching over 2.5 lakh higher secondary students.
- ▶ Exemplary Models: Community skill parks and centers of excellence established in the state are recognized as exemplary models for training in advanced technologies nationally.

#### ◆ Community Impact:

- ▶ Migration Trends: Growing pool of highly skilled individuals in various regions of Kerala migrating to cities like Thiruvananthapuram contributes to the state's overall talent dispersion.



## THE UNITED STATES' AND CLIMATE RESPONSE

**Context:** United States has been one of the biggest laggards on climate action. Not only has it not cut down on its emissions so far, it has done little to meet its financial and technological obligations.

#### About:

The United States' Lacklustre Climate Commitments: A Closer Look at COP28

#### ◆ Loss and Damage Fund Contributions:

- ▶ UAE: \$100 million
- ▶ Germany: \$100 million
- ▶ France: Approximately \$110 million
- ▶ Italy: Approximately \$110 million
- ▶ United Kingdom: \$60 million
- ▶ United States: \$17.3 million

#### ◆ Historical Emissions Responsibility:

#### ◆ United States Share: The United States holds the

largest share of historical emissions, over 20% of global carbon dioxide emissions since 1850.

- ◆ **Historical Emissions:** Despite China emitting more in the last 15 years, the U.S. still maintains a significant historical emissions burden.

Country	Share of historical Emissions (1850-2021) in %
US	20.9
European Union	11.8
China	11.5
Brazil	4.6
India	3.3

Source: Study published in *Nature*, 2023

#### ◆ Kyoto Protocol and Emission Reductions:

- ▶ **Non ratification of Kyoto Protocol:** The U.S. never ratified the Kyoto Protocol, failing to abide by assigned emissions reduction targets.
- ▶ **The U.S collective contribution:** By 2020, Annex-I countries collectively reduced net greenhouse gas emissions by about 25%, with the U.S. contributing only 0.4%.

#### ◆ 2020 Emission Targets:

- ▶ The U.S. claims to have met its 2020 emission targets (**17% reduction from 2005 baseline**). The U.S. used a 2005 baseline, unlike most Annex-I countries using a **1990 baseline**.

#### ◆ Future Emission Reduction Targets:

- ▶ **The U.S. promise:** The U.S. promises a 50-52% reduction by 2030 from 2005 levels.
- ▶ **IPCC recommendations:** IPCC recommends a global emissions drop of at least 43% by 2030 from 2019 levels to achieve the 1.5-degree Celsius target.

#### ◆ Current Policies and Projections:

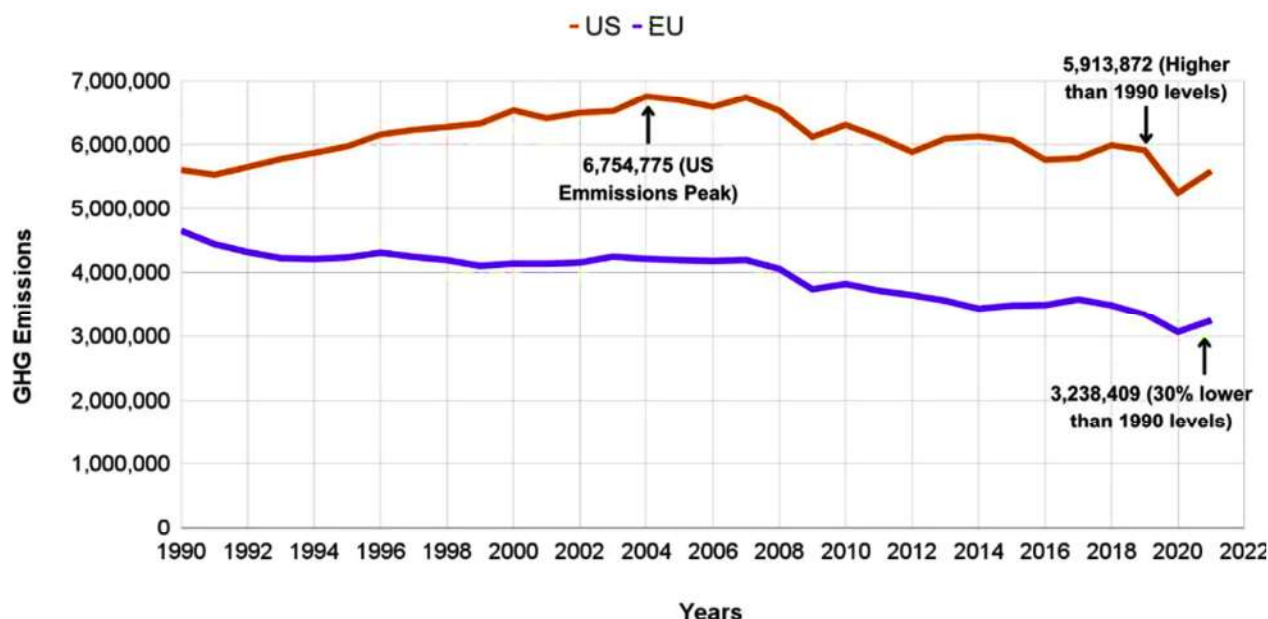
- ▶ **UNFCCC assessment** suggests the U.S. may achieve only about a 20% reduction from 2005 baseline by 2030.
- ▶ **Inflation Reduction Act:** The **Inflation Reduction Act** is crucial for the U.S. to meet the 50-52% reduction target.

#### ◆ Fossil Fuel Dependency:

- ▶ **Largest Emitter:** The U.S. remains the largest producer of fossil fuels, with over 80% of its energy needs met by oil, natural gas, and coal.
- ▶ **Biased Criticism:** Despite being a significant fossil fuel guzzler, the U.S. faces less criticism compared to countries like India.

## Annual Greenhouse Gases Emissions

In thousands of tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> eq



### Climate Finance Contributions:

- ▶ **Green Climate Fund (GCF):** The U.S. commits \$3 billion to the **Green Climate Fund (GCF)** for the next four years, the largest sum from any single country.
- ▶ **Climate actions:** GCF handles a small fraction of the funds required for **climate actions**, estimated to be trillions of dollars annually.

### Global Climate Finance Target:

- ▶ **100 billion Dollar target:** In 2009, the U.S. proposed a 100 billion Dollar per year target for climate finance by developed countries from 2020 onwards.
- ▶ **Issues with target:** Despite claims of reaching this target in 2022, concerns exist about double-counting, repurposing, and green washing.

### Adaptation Funding Challenges:

- ▶ **Adaptation Gap Report:** The **Adaptation Gap Report** reveals a decline in funds for adaptation activities, contrary to the decision to double financial flows to adaptation in Glasgow.
- ▶ **Global Goal on Adaptation:** The United States played a role in excluding separate financial provisions for adaptation in the **Global Goal on Adaptation** decision at COP28.

are deemed insufficient, raising concerns about its commitment to addressing the global climate crisis.



## JAPAN' SLIM LANDER ON MOON

**Context:** Recently, Japan's first-ever moon landing in 2024 has sent pictures of moon's craters which are seen as a significant milestone for the mission.

### The SLIM Mission:

- ◆ **Development by JAXA:** Developed by the **Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)**, SLIM represents an experimental mission with the primary goal of demonstrating precise and accurate lunar landings. The spacecraft, often referred to as the "**moon sniper**," comes with a price tag of an estimated **18 billion yen (120 million Dollars)**.
- ◆ **Mission Objectives:** SLIM aims to touch down with unparalleled precision, within a mere 100 meters of its target point inside **Shioli, a small crater on the moon's near side**.
- ◆ **Innovative Path to the Moon:** SLIM's journey to the moon was unconventional, employing a fuel-efficient trajectory.
  - ▶ After its launch on September 6, 2023, the spacecraft utilized a lunar flyby and a deep space loop before returning to the moon's vicinity.

### Way Forward:

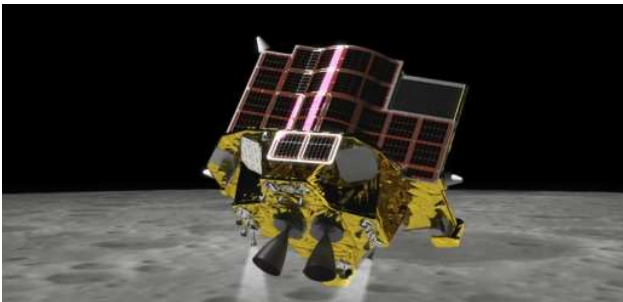
- ◆ The United States' contributions to emission reductions, climate finance, and adaptation efforts



- This innovative path not only conserved fuel but also contributed to reducing overall mission costs.

### Preparations for Lunar Landing:

- ◆ **Optical Navigation System:** Upon entering its elliptical lunar orbit, SLIM initiated preparations for its upcoming landing attempt. The spacecraft's **optical navigation system**, complemented by maps from **Japan's Kaguya orbiter**, is designed to guide SLIM with unprecedented accuracy to the designated landing site.



- ◆ **Unique Landing Legs:** SLIM's design includes crushable, **3D-printed aluminium lattice landing legs**. These legs serve a crucial role in absorbing the impact of touchdown and ensuring proper orientation on the crater slope, enhancing the overall success of the mission.
- ◆ **Scientific Payloads:**
  - **Multi-Band Camera:** Beyond its precision landing objectives, SLIM carries scientific payloads that contribute to lunar exploration.
    - The **Multi-Band Camera** on board is tasked with analysing the **composition of lunar minerals**, providing valuable insights into the **moon's geological makeup**.

- **Lunar Rovers:** SLIM also hosts **two small rovers** designed to traverse the lunar surface and conduct experiments.

- These rovers not only expand our understanding of **lunar terrain** but also showcase Japan's commitment to technological innovation in space exploration.

### Implications for Future Missions:

- ◆ **Revolutionizing Lunar and Planetary Missions:** The success of SLIM's technology could revolutionize future lunar and planetary missions. The capability for targeted landings at scientifically significant sites opens new possibilities for exploration and scientific discovery.
- ◆ **Cost-Effective Space Exploration:** SLIM's innovative trajectory and precise landing technology contribute to the broader goal of making space exploration more cost-effective. This achievement positions Japan as a key player in the endeavour to explore the moon and beyond efficiently.

### Way Forward:

- ◆ Japan's SLIM mission represents a significant **leap forward in space exploration**, showcasing not only **technological prowess** but also a commitment to **precision and innovation**.
- ◆ As SLIM prepares for its **historic moon landing attempt**, the world watches with anticipation, recognizing the **potential impact on the future of lunar and planetary exploration**.
- ◆ The success of SLIM may well be a catalyst for more ambitious and cost-effective missions, heralding a new era in space exploration.

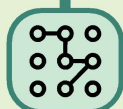


**IAS  
2024**

## PRELIMS TEST SERIES 2024

### PT MAXIMA

**4600+ QUESTIONS**



**Tests as per Changing  
Pattern of the UPSC  
Prelims**



**Concept & Essential Skills  
Building through Tests  
and their Discussion**



**Level-wise Questions for  
gradual improvement &  
exam readiness**



**One-on-one mentorship  
for Personalised Guidance**



**Emphasis on both Static &  
Current Events as per the  
evolving format**

Scan QR Code for  
More details



**PROGRAMME FEE**  
**₹ 8,500 (+GST)**

**TOTAL 68 TESTS**

**33**

**SUB SECTIONAL  
TESTS**  
50 QUESTIONS

**12**

**SECTIONAL TESTS  
(GS & CSAT)**  
100 & 50 QUESTIONS

**07**

**CURRENT AFFAIRS  
TESTS**  
100 QUESTIONS

**16**

**MOCK TESTS TESTS  
(GS & CSAT)**  
100 & 80 QUESTIONS



**8448496262**



**iascore.in**

**Section B [SPECIALS]**

**Topic**

☞ Healthcare Sector in India



## HEALTHCARE SECTOR IN INDIA

**Context:** The Indian government is considering the establishment of a comprehensive health sector regulator, merging private and government insurance schemes, to enhance accessibility and affordability of healthcare.

- ◆ **Key Demand:** Doctors' associations have advocated for a unified regulatory body to oversee both **private and public insurance**, aiming to provide better **tertiary care access to citizens**.

### Background:

- ◆ Current discussions between the **Ministries of Finance and Health** reveal a potential initiative to create a health sector regulator in India.
- ◆ This regulatory body would bring under its purview **both private and government health insurance schemes**, addressing the call for a unified approach by doctors' bodies.
- ◆ The move is in **response to the increasing penetration of private insurance** and the need for restructuring government insurance schemes.

### Need:

- ◆ A crucial aspect driving the consideration for a health sector regulator is the goal outlined in the **IRDAI Vision 2047**, aiming to achieve **'Insurance for All' by 2047**.
- ◆ The intent is to ensure that every citizen has **appropriate life, health, and property insurance coverage**.
- ◆ The **current challenges include lower penetration, inadequate coverage, and escalating healthcare costs, leaving over 400 million individuals without health insurance**.

### Present System:

- ◆ The present system faces **challenges** related to **standardization of treatment costs, settlement of health claims, and disparities in policy terms and claim restrictions** across insurers.
- ◆ A report by the **National Insurance Agency** emphasizes the need for concentrated efforts to drive health insurance **penetration and affordability**.
- ◆ The **National Health Authority (NHA)** has already taken steps, such as the development of the **National Health Claims Exchange (HCX)**, to address interoperability of health claims.

### Proposed System:

- ◆ The proposed health sector regulator would not only oversee private and government insurance but also

play a crucial role in **standardizing treatment costs and settling health claims**.

- ◆ It may collaborate with stakeholders, including insurance companies, to **develop a detailed plan** for enhancing health insurance coverage.
- ◆ The regulator could function as an **industry watchdog**, broadening the scope of the National Health Claims Exchange.

### Benefits:

- ◆ The establishment of a health sector regulator holds the potential to **standardize and lower costs** in the health insurance segment.
- ◆ It aligns with the **National Health Policy, 2017**, emphasizing the need for a regulatory mechanism to address market failures resulting from information asymmetry.
- ◆ The regulator could contribute to achieving the goal of **'Insurance for All by 2047'** by ensuring appropriate coverage for every citizen.

### Issues/Challenges:

- ◆ Challenges in implementing a healthcare regulator include the **complex nature of the healthcare sector, varying institutions, and the need for a district-level presence** to address diverse issues.
- ◆ The **Clinical Establishments Act (2010)** requires further attention, and a multi-stakeholder approach is suggested to address patient issues.
- ◆ **Balancing regulation for both public and private healthcare institutions**, considering factors like pricing and infrastructure, presents a significant challenge.

### Possible Suggestions:

- ◆ Experts propose an **accountable social regulation approach**, considering differential realities in different regions.
- ◆ **Multi-stakeholder bodies**, without an inspection-centric approach, may address patient issues effectively.
- ◆ The regulatory system should involve an **accredited quality system, universally applied and audited, covering aspects like infrastructure, pricing, and electronic health records**.

- ◆ The establishment of a health sector regulator in India is a critical step toward **achieving comprehensive and inclusive health insurance coverage**. The proposed regulator, guided by the principles of the National Health Policy, 2017, can address existing challenges, ensure accountability, and contribute to the realization of the **'Insurance for All by 2047' vision**.

### Analysis and Reasons

#### Patient Experiences and Calls for Regulation: Cases

- ◆ Recent public hearings, such as the **'Jan Sunwai'** in Pune, shed light on challenges faced by patients in private hospitals during the pandemic.
- ◆ **Despite government rate caps, instances of overcharging persist**, forcing families into high-interest borrowing.
- ◆ The need for a healthcare regulator, advocating for **accountable social regulation** that adapts to diverse realities across regions.

#### Economic Survey's Endorsement and Complexity of Implementation:

- ◆ The Economic Survey supports the idea of a sectoral regulator **to address market failures** due to information asymmetry in healthcare.
- ◆ However, veterans in healthcare highlight the **complexity of implementing such regulation**.
- ◆ Unlike sectors with few players, healthcare encompasses **institutions of varying sizes and structures**.
- ◆ Emphasizing the intricacies of healthcare issues from overcharging **A multi-stakeholder approach** to medical negligence.

#### Even-Handed Approach and Differentiating Responsibilities:

- ◆ The importance of an even-handed regulator that differentiates **between public and private healthcare entities**, considering their diversity.
- ◆ The need to **separate pricing and regulatory issues**, drawing parallels with the pharmaceutical sector's distinct bodies handling pricing and regulatory matters.
- ◆ The clarity required on the **regulator's objectives and suggests a quality system universally applied and audited**.

#### Quality, Infrastructure, and Pricing Considerations:

- ◆ The **rationale** behind a regulator to standardize healthcare matters.

- ◆ The regulator's role in **assessing quality, infrastructure, and pricing**.
- ◆ The challenges of implementing **electronic records universally** but sees them as a necessary component for an effective regulatory system.

#### Current Position and Scope of Digital Healthcare Services in India:

- ◆ **National Digital Health Mission (NDHM):** Launched under the National Health Policy, 2017, NDHM aims to create a comprehensive digital health ecosystem. It includes initiatives like the creation of digital health IDs, electronic health records, and the National Health Portal. The ABDM, a relaunch of NDHM, intends to digitize the entire health ecosystem, though participation is voluntary.
- ◆ **Telemedicine and Teleconsultation:** The Telemedicine Practice Guidelines under the NMC Act, 2019, regulate telemedicine in India. These guidelines outline prescription protocols and the responsibilities of registered medical practitioners during online consultations. The Information Technology Act, 2000, governs data collection by teleconsultation intermediaries.
- ◆ **E-Pharmacies:** Despite the absence of specific regulations, e-pharmacies are governed by the IT Act. Recent developments involve a draft amendment to the Drugs and Cosmetics Amendment Rules, 2018, which proposes mandatory registration with the Central Licensing Authority for e-pharmacies.
- ◆ **Government Initiatives:** The Indian government has launched various initiatives such as digital health IDs, electronic health records, the National Health Portal, e-hospital, **'Mera Aspataal'** for patient feedback, and vaccine tracker mobile apps under the ABDM to enhance healthcare services.
- ◆ **Regulation of Medical Devices:** Under the Drugs and Cosmetics (D&C) Act and its rules, all medical devices, including software or accessories designed for diagnosis, prevention, monitoring, or treatment, are classified as 'drugs.' Compliance with the D&C Act is required for their development and distribution.

#### Data Privacy, Confidentiality, and Funding:

- ◆ **Data Protection:** The Information Technology (Reasonable Security Practices and Procedures and Sensitive Personal Data or Information) Rules, 2011, govern data protection. These rules apply to healthcare businesses, emphasizing obtaining patient consent and implementing security practices.
- ◆ **Cybersecurity Directives:** Healthcare service providers in India must comply with cybersecurity directives from the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In). This includes mandatory reporting of specific cybersecurity incidents within six hours.

◆ **Funding and Investments:** The introduction of ABDM has spurred investments in the digital healthcare sector. Notable investments include HealthKart raising funds in Series H rounds and Tata 1mg becoming a unicorn with substantial funding.

#### Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic:

- ◆ **Vaccine Campaign and Legal Changes:** The Indian government accelerated the vaccine approval process, capped vaccine prices, and provided fiscal support. Legal changes included caps on drug prices, amendments to the Epidemic Disease Act, and regulations for countering COVID-19.
- ◆ **Digital Technology Response:** The pandemic accelerated the adoption of digital technology in healthcare, leading to increased use of telemedicine and e-pharmacy services.
- ◆ **Financial Aid:** The government provided financial aid through initiatives like the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana and the Loan Guarantee Scheme for Covid Affected Sectors.

#### Future Outlook and New Opportunities:

- ◆ **Telemedicine and AI Adoption:** Telemedicine, AI, and 3D printing have become significant contributors to India's healthcare sector. The future promises increased accessibility, improved healthcare delivery, specialist consultations, chronic disease management, home healthcare, and regulatory support.

◆ **Public-Private Partnerships (PPP):** The healthcare sector in India is witnessing a growth in PPP models, focusing on infrastructure, service delivery, and accessibility. Schemes like Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana utilize PPP for establishing and upgrading medical institutions.

◆ **Natural Health and Herbal Medicine Products:** The market for natural health and herbal medicine products is expanding, with regulations in place for manufacturing and sale. Established companies like Dabur India Ltd, Baidyanath Group, Himalaya Drug Company, and Zandu Pharmaceuticals play a significant role.

◆ **Medical Tourism:** The Indian government actively promotes medical tourism, collaborating with healthcare providers to ensure patient safety and quality care. Initiatives like the Medical Value Travel Facilitation Portal and e-Medical visa facilitate international patients.

#### Conclusion

- ◆ India's healthcare sector is evolving with a focus on digitalization, public-private partnerships, and natural health products. Despite challenges, the integration of technology, regulatory reforms, and collaborative efforts position India's healthcare ecosystem for positive transformation, aiming for universal health coverage and improved health outcomes for its citizens.



## Section C [PRELIMS]

To Attempt  
Weekly Current Affairs Test, Visit

[www.iasscore.in](http://www.iasscore.in)

- ❧ Kerala's Alangad jaggery
- ❧ European Union's Artificial Intelligence Act
- ❧ 78 MPs Suspended
- ❧ Exclusion of Blood Disorders from Job Reservations
- ❧ Supreme Court Rulings on Enforcement Directorate's Arrest Powers
- ❧ Three sub-schemes under the RAMP programme launched
- ❧ World Bank's move on Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs)
- ❧ Climate Change Performance Index 2024
- ❧ Centre allows use of sugarcane juice, B-molasses to make ethanol
- ❧ 'Noma': The latest addition to WHO's list of neglected tropical diseases
- ❧ COVID sub-variant JN.1





## VEER BAAL DIWAS

**Context:** Prime Minister has participated in the programme marking 'Veer Baal Diwas' on 26th December, 2023 in New Delhi.

- ◆ 'Veer Bal Diwas' is celebrated in tribute to the martyrdom of Sri Guru Gobind Singh's sons, **Sahibzadas Baba Zorawar Singh Ji and Baba Fateh Singh Ji**.

### About Guru Gobind Singh:

- ◆ Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth sikh guru, a spiritual leader, warrior, poet and philosopher.
- ◆ He formally became the leader and protector of the Sikhs at the age of nine after his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru, was killed by Aurangzeb for refusing to convert to Islam.
- ◆ He founded the sixth warrior community called Khalsa in 1699.
- ◆ The community was created especially for the defence of Sikhism and Hinduism against the Mughals.
- ◆ Guru Gobind Singh fought 14 battles against the Mughals and won most of the battles.
- ◆ Guru Gobind Singh Ji declared Guru Granth Sahib as Sikhism's Holy Scripture in 1708, before his death.
- ◆ He left his bodily form on October 7 in 1708.



## COMPETITION COMMISSION OF INDIA (DETERMINATION OF TURNOVER OR INCOME) REGULATIONS, 2023

**Context:** CCI seeks comments on draft of Competition Commission of India (Determination of Turnover or Income) Regulations, 2023.

### Key Highlights:

- ◆ The **Competition Commission of India (CCI)** is soliciting feedback on the draft Competition Commission of India (Determination of Turnover or Income) Regulations, 2023.
- ◆ The **Competition (Amendment) Act, 2023**, introduced changes to **Sections 27, 48, and Section 64**, necessitating the formulation of regulations to determine turnover or income under specific clauses.
- ◆ To comply with the amended sections, the CCI has proposed the draft **CCI (Determination of Turnover or Income) Regulations, 2023**.

- ◆ These regulations outline the methodology for determining turnover or income concerning **Section 27(b) and Section 48 of the Act**.

### Competition Commission of India (CCI):

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) is a statutory body of the Government of India responsible for enforcing the Competition Act, of 2002; it was duly constituted in March 2009.
- The Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act, 1969 (MRTP Act) was repealed and replaced by the **Competition Act, 2002**, on the recommendations of the **Raghavan committee**.
- **Composition:** The Commission consists of **one Chairperson and six Members** who shall be appointed by the Central Government.



## CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER AND OTHER ELECTION COMMISSIONERS (APPOINTMENT, CONDITIONS OF SERVICE AND TERM OF OFFICE) BILL, 2023 PASSED IN LOK SABHA

**Context:** The Lok Sabha has passed the bill to regulate the appointment of the chief election commissioner and other election commissioners.

### About the Bill:

- ◆ **Background:** The Bill replaces the **Election Commission (Conditions of Service of Election Commissioners and Transaction of Business) Act, 1991**.
- ◆ **Aim:** The bill provides details related to the **appointment, qualifications, search committee, selection committee, term of office, salary, resignation and removal, leave, and pension** of the chief election commissioner and other election commissioners.
- ◆ **Provisions of the Bill:**
  - As per the provisions of the bill, the CEC and ECs will be appointed by the **President of India** on the recommendation of a selection committee.
  - However, the panel will consist of **three members – the prime minister, the Union cabinet minister, and the leader of the opposition**.
  - Recommendations of the Selection Committee will be valid even when there is a vacancy in this Committee.



- ▶ A **Search Committee** headed by the Cabinet Secretary will propose a panel of names to the Selection Committee.
- ▶ **Eligibility for the posts** includes holding (or having held) a post equivalent to the Secretary to the central government.
- ▶ The **salary and conditions** of service of the CEC and ECs will be equivalent to that of **Cabinet Secretary**. Under the 1991 Act, it was equivalent to the salary of a **Supreme Court Judge**.
- ▶ **Eligibility criteria:** The CEC and ECs must:
  - be persons of integrity,
  - have knowledge and experience in the management and conduct of elections, and
  - be or have been Secretary (or equivalent) to the government.
- ▶ **Term and reappointment:** Members of the Election Commission will hold office for six years, or until they attain the age of **65 years**, whichever is earlier.

- Members of the Commission cannot be re-appointed. If an EC is appointed as a CEC, the overall period of the term may not be more than six years.

### Key Issues and Analysis

- ◆ The selection process of the Election Commission may be dominated by the government, which has implications for its independence.
- ◆ Accepting the Selection Committee's recommendations in spite of a vacancy in its constitution may effectively lead to a monopoly of government members in selecting candidates.
- ◆ Making the CEC and EC's salary equivalent to the Cabinet Secretary may lead to government influence as it is fixed by the government. This is unlike the salary of a Supreme Court judge which is fixed through an Act of Parliament.
- ◆ CECs and ECs also perform quasi-judicial functions. Limiting these posts to senior bureaucrats may exclude other suitable candidates.

**Table: Suggestions made by various Commissions/ Courts for composition of the Selection Committee:**

Body	Members
Goswami Committee (1990)	For CEC: Appointed by the President in consultation with the Chief Justice + Leader of Opposition of Lok Sabha (or leader of the largest party in Lok Sabha).  For EC: Appointed by the President in consultation with the Chief Justice + Leader of Opposition of Lok Sabha (or leader of the largest party in Lok Sabha) + CEC.
The Constitution (Seventieth Amendment) Bill 1990*	Chairman of Rajya Sabha + Speaker of Lok Sabha + Leader of the Opposition (or the leader of the largest party) in Lok Sabha. The CEC was further made a part of the consultative process in the appointment of the Election Commissioners.
National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution Report (2002)	Prime Minister + Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha + the Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha + the Speaker of Lok Sabha + the Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha.
Law Commission (2015)	Prime Minister + the Leader of Opposition of Lok Sabha (or the leader of the largest opposition party in Lok Sabha) + the Chief Justice.
Supreme Court (2023)	Prime Minister + Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha (or leader of single largest opposition party in Lok Sabha) + Chief Justice.

## LOK SABHA PASSES PRESS AND REGISTRATION OF PERIODICALS BILL

**Context:** In a historic decision, the Lok Sabha has passed the Press and Registration of Periodicals Bill, 2023, repealing the colonial era law of the Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867.

- ◆ The Bill has already been passed by Rajya Sabha in the Monsoon Session.

### Highlights of the Bill:

- ◆ **Grant of title allotment and Certificate of Registration Periodicals:** The Bill provides for a simple online mechanism to apply for title verification and grant of certificate of registration by the Press Registrar General to a periodical as a simultaneous process.
  - ▶ There is no requirement of furnishing any declaration before the local authority or its authentication by the local authority.
  - ▶ A person who has been convicted by any court for an offence involving terrorist act or unlawful activity, or having done anything against the security of the State shall not be permitted to bring out a periodical.
  - ▶ Facsimile edition of a foreign periodical can be printed in India with prior approval of the Central Government and its registration with the Press Registrar General.
- ◆ **Printing Presses:** A printer of a periodical to furnish an online intimation to the **Press Registrar General** and the local authority.
  - ▶ No requirement by the Printer to file any declaration before the local authority or obtain authentication from the authority.
- ◆ **Role of District magistrate/local authority:**
  - ▶ The Bill envisages minimalistic role of the District Magistrate/local authority with regard to grant of Certificate of Registration and title allotment.
  - ▶ On receipt of an application,
    - The District Magistrate is expected to provide its comments/NOC to the **Press Registrar General within 60 days;**
    - Thereafter the Press Registrar General can proceed to take a decision for grant of registration even where the comments/NOC is not received from the **DM/local authority after 60 days.**
  - ▶ No requirement for a publisher to file any declaration before the District Magistrate.

## PM JANMAN

**Context:** Union Cabinet approved the Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM JANMAN), aimed at providing PVTG households and habitations with basic facilities.

### Key Highlights-

- ◆ PM JANMAN aims to address the basic needs of Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs), encompassing housing, water, sanitation, education, health, connectivity, and livelihood opportunities.
- ◆ Part of the Pradhan Mantri-PVTG Development Mission, the initiative allocates Rs.15, 000 crore over three years to uplift PVTG households and habitations.



### PVTGs:

- ◆ Originally termed Primitive Tribal Groups in 1960-61, PVTGs were identified for special attention due to disparities among Scheduled Tribes. The category was later renamed in 2006.
- ◆ Encompassing 75 groups in **22,544 villages across 18 states** and one Union Territory, PVTGs face challenges such as low literacy, pre-agricultural lifestyles, and subsistence economies.
- ◆ Population sizes vary widely, from under **1,000 to over 1 lakh**, presenting unique challenges for development strategies.
- ◆ **Challenges Faced by PVTGs:**
  - ▶ **Marginalization:** Isolation, low population, and distinct socio-economic traits result in limited access to basic services, social discrimination, and vulnerability to displacement.
  - ▶ **Economic Struggles:** Loss of traditional livelihoods, exploitation by middlemen, and lack of market knowledge for Non-Timber Forest Produce pose significant threats.

- **Political Underrepresentation:** Limited political representation hinders their participation in decision-making processes.

### Support Schemes for PVTGs:

- ◆ **Government Initiatives:** The **Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana**, Integrated Tribal Development Project, Tribal Sub-Plan, and others aim at holistic development.
- ◆ **Legislation and Protection:** Acts such as the Forest Rights Act 2006, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989, and Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act 1996 provide legal safeguards.

### PM-JANMAN's Approaches:

- ◆ **Identification of Challenges:** PM-JANMAN addresses outdated criteria for PVTG recognition, emphasizing the need for proper identification through a Human Development Index.
- ◆ **Participatory Approach:** Abandoning a uniform strategy, the initiative adopts a community-based approach, involving PVTGs in decision-making for land rights, social inclusion, and cultural preservation.
- ◆ **Livelihood Promotion:** Focus on skills training, resource provision, and implementation of the Forest Rights Act ensures sustainable development while preserving cultural heritage.
- ◆ **Health, Nutrition, and Education:** Tailored outreach strategies, cultural integration in education, and infrastructure development ensure accessibility in remote areas.
- ◆ **Infrastructure Development:** Relaxing guidelines for schemes like **Pradhan Mantri Grameen Sadak Yojana** and **Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana**, PM-JANMAN adopts a tola-based approach for development planning tailored to PVTGs' specific needs.

## INDIA'S WINTER ARCTIC RESEARCH

**Context:** Recently, the Union Minister of Earth Sciences flagged off India's first winter scientific expedition to Himadri, the nation's Arctic Research Station situated in Ny-Ålesund within the Norwegian archipelago of Svalbard in the Arctic.

### About the Research:

- ◆ The first batch of the maiden Arctic winter expedition comprises researchers from the host **National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR)**,

**Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Mandi, Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) and Raman Research Institute.**

### The Winter Arctic Scientific Expedition:

- ◆ Indian scientific expeditions to the Arctic during the winter will allow researchers to conduct unique scientific observations during polar nights, where there is no sunlight for nearly **24 hours** and **sub-zero temperatures**.
- ◆ It opens more avenues for India to expand our scientific capabilities in Earth's poles.
- ◆ This will aid in expanding understanding of the Arctic, especially **Climate change, space weather, sea-ice and ocean circulation dynamics, ecosystem adaptations, etc.** which affect weather and climate in the tropics, including monsoons.
- ◆ India has operated a research base in the Arctic named **Himadri** since 2008, which has been mostly hosting scientists during the **summer (April to October)**.
- ◆ Priority research areas include atmospheric, biological, marine, and space sciences, environmental chemistry, and studies on **cryosphere, terrestrial ecosystems, and astrophysics**.
- ◆ India will join a small group of countries that operate their Arctic research bases through the winter.
- ◆ In recent years, climate change and global warming research has been attracting scientists to the Arctic region.

#### Note:

- Dakshin Gangotri in Antarctica was set up much earlier in **1983**.
- Dakshin Gangotri is now submerged under ice, but India's two other stations, **Maitri and Bharti**, are in use.
- Indian scientific expeditions to the Earth's poles (the Arctic and the Antarctic) are facilitated under the **PACER (Polar and Cryosphere) scheme** of the MoES, solely through the aegis of the **National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR)**, Goa, an autonomous institution of the MoES.

## MILLI-SECOND BURST DETECTED BY ASTROSAT

**Context:** AstroSat, India's first multi-wavelength space-based observatory, has made a groundbreaking discovery, detecting bright sub-second X-ray bursts from a novel neutron star with an ultrahigh magnetic field, known as a Magnetar.

**What are Magnetars?**

Magnetars are neutron stars characterized by **ultrahigh magnetic fields**, surpassing Earth's magnetic field by over one quadrillion times. These extreme astrophysical objects emit high-energy electromagnetic radiation due to the decay of their magnetic fields.

**Key Characteristics:**

- ◆ Strong temporal variability, including slow rotation and rapid spin-down.
- ◆ Display of bright but short bursts, extending to months-long outbursts.

**SGR J1830-0645 - A Unique Magnetar****Discovery and Background:**

- ◆ SGR J1830-0645 was discovered in October 2020 by NASA's Swift spacecraft.
- ◆ Relatively young, around 24,000 years old.
- ◆ Isolated neutron star.
- ◆ **Motivation for Study:** Scientists from the **Raman Research Institute (RRI)** and the University of Delhi aimed to study and explore the **characteristics of SGR J1830-0645 using AstroSat's instruments.**

**Scientific Analysis with AstroSat**

- ◆ **Instruments Used:** The study utilized two instruments onboard AstroSat: the Large Area X-Ray Proportional Counter (LAXPC) and the Soft X-Ray telescope (SXT).

**Key Findings:**

- ◆ Detection of 67 short sub-second X-ray bursts.
- ◆ Average duration of bursts: 33 milliseconds.
- ◆ Brightest burst lasted approximately 90 milliseconds.
- ◆ **Published Study:**
  - ▶ The research, published by the **Royal Astronomical Society**, highlights SGR J1830-0645 as a unique magnetar exhibiting emission lines in its spectra.

**Unraveling the Mysteries****Emission Lines and Their Origins:**

- ◆ The study noted the presence of emission lines in the spectra of SGR J1830-0645.
- ◆ Potential origins include fluorescence of iron, proton cyclotron line feature, or instrumental effects.

**Energy-Dependence Findings:**

- ◆ Different energy-dependence observed compared to other magnetars.
- ◆ Two thermal blackbody emission components with distinct radii (0.65 and 2.45 km) observed on the neutron star's surface.

**Future Research Aims****Varied X-ray Emission Behavior:**

- ◆ The pulsed component of the overall X-ray emission showed significant variation with energy, increasing up to 5 kiloelectron Volt (keV) and exhibiting a steep drop thereafter.



## ***Section D*** [QUIK BYTES]

- ☞ Solar-electric boat Barracuda launched
- ☞ Mahalakshmi Scheme
- ☞ Tax Inspectors without Borders (TIWB)
- ☞ Gelephu Smartcity Project
- ☞ Disinflation
- ☞ Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace

### **[LOCATION IN NEWS]**

- ☞ Srivaikuntam
- ☞ Red Sea

### **[SPECIES IN NEWS]**

- ☞ Wisent (European Wild Bison)
- ☞ Black Pelicans (*Pelecanus niger*)



## Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)



The **8th edition of Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS)** Conclave of Chiefs (CoC) was conducted by **Royal Thai Navy** at Bangkok.

### About:

- ◆ During the Conclave of Chiefs, Thailand assumed the duties of Chair of IONS and Work Plan for next two years was finalized.
- ◆ As a first, Flag designed by India was selected as the IONS Flag.
- ◆ India also took over as the co-Chair of IONS Working Groups on Maritime Security and HADR for the forthcoming cycle.
- ◆ Republic of Korea Navy was welcomed by the Conclave as the latest 'Observer', raising the collective strength of IONS to 34 members.

India is also scheduled to take over as the Chair of IONS (2025-27) during 9th CoC planned to be conducted in India in end 2025.

## Physical Training Instructor (PTI) designated as a 'Teacher'



The Supreme Court (SC) has held that **Physical training instructors (PTIs)** come within the definition of "teachers" though they may not necessarily take classes within the four walls of a building.

### About SC's views:

- Physical training instructors impart to students the skills and rules of various sports and games.
- In this view, it is inherent in the duties of a **physical director** that he imparts to the students various skills and techniques of these games and sports.
- There are a large number of **indoor and outdoor games** in which the students have to be trained.
- Therefore, he has to teach them several skills and techniques of these games apart from the rules applicable to these games.

## China bans export of rare earth processing technologies



Recently, China, the **world's top processor of rare earths**, has banned the export of technology to **extract and separate the strategic metals**, as it overhauled a list of technologies deemed key to national security.

### About the information:

- It also banned the **export of production technology** for rare earth metals and alloy materials as well as **technology to prepare some rare earth magnets**.

- The move comes as Europe and the United States scramble to wean themselves off rare earths from China, which accounts for **90% of global refined output**.
- China has mastered the **solvent extraction process** to refine the strategic minerals, which Western rare earth companies have struggled to deploy due to technical complexities and pollution concerns.

#### Solvent extraction process:

- **Solvent extraction** is the process of removal of a solute component from a solid using a liquid solvent and is one of the modern extraction processes.
- It is also called **leaching or solid-liquid extraction**.
- In solvent extraction, **two immiscible liquids** are shaken together.
- The more polar solutes dissolve preferentially in the more polar solvent, and the less polar solutes in the less polar solvent. In this experiment, the **non-polar halogens** preferentially dissolve in the non-polar mineral oil.

### 106th Indian Economic Association (IEA) Conference



106th Indian Economic Association (IEA) Conference began at the **Giri Institute of Development Studies (GIDS) in Lucknow**.

#### Key Highlights-

Call to the working economists to step up their game and devise a workable roadmap to increase the per capita income of the households.

#### About IEA-

- The IEA was established in 1917 with the primary objective of promoting the study and application of economics in India.
- It provides a forum for economists to engage in academic discussions, research, and policy-related activities.
- The IEA publishes the "**Indian Economic Journal**," which features articles, research papers, and reviews on various economic issues.
- The IEA organizes **conferences, seminars, and workshops** to facilitate the exchange of ideas among economists and scholars.

### SPECIES IN NEWS

#### Black Tiger

As per the 2022 cycle of the **All India Tiger Estimation**, 16 individuals were recorded at **Similipal Tiger Reserve**, out of which **10 were melanistic**.



#### About the Species:

- Black Tigers are a rare colour variant of the **Bengal tiger** and are not a distinct species or geographic subspecies.
- The coat colouration and patterning that make the wild cats appears dark boil down to a single mutation in the **Transmembrane Aminopeptidase Q (Taqppep) gene**.
- **Pseudo Melanistic:**
  - The abnormally dark or black coat in such tigers is termed pseudo melanistic or false coloured.
  - Melanistic refers to having very dark skin/hair due to **higher-than-normal level of the pigment (substance that gives pigmentation to skin/hair is called melanin)**.
  - There is a high probability (about 60%) that the tiger will have the **mutant gene**, if randomly selected from Similipal.

#### Similipal Tiger Reserve:

- It was formally designated a tiger reserve in 1956 and brought under **Project Tiger in the year 1973**.
- It was declared a biosphere reserve by the Government of India in June, 1994.
- It has been part of the **UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserve since 2009**.

### Red giant flying squirrel (*Petaurista petaurista*)



A nocturnal flying squirrel has resurfaced in **Arunachal Pradesh** after going missing for 42 years.

#### About the Species:

- **Geographic Range:** It ranges from the eastern border regions of Afghanistan to Java and from **Kashmir, Taiwan, and southern China** to Sri Lanka.
- Its greatest numbers are found in the **forest regions of Pakistan**.
- **Physical Features:**
  - The giant flying squirrel has a distinctive, thickly haired flying membrane that extends from its wrists to its hind legs and is further expanded by a skin fold between the **tail root and the hind legs**.
  - This membrane is composed of **sheets of muscles** that can be tensed or relaxed at will, thus controlling the direction of glide.
  - ***Petaurista petaurista*** is characterized by its large eyes and mahogany-red coloring, though coloration varies with environment.
- Relative to other squirrels, this species is very large; its head and body length average **398mm** and its tail adds an additional **422mm**.
- The lifespan of these squirrels can be up to **16 years** in captivity.
- They **do not hibernate**, but they may migrate to areas where food is more abundant.



## Fimbristylis jaleeliana



Recently, the new species belongs to the **family Cyperaceae** was discovered in the lateritic hillocks of **Kannur district**.

### About:

- **Fimbristylis vahl** is one of the largest genera within Cyperaceae.
- The genus has **320 species** globally, distributed in tropical and subtropical regions.
- In India, the **Fimbristylis genus** is represented by **124 species**.
- Out of these, **97 species** are found in the **Western Ghats** and along the west coast.

### Habitat and Threats:

- Fimbristylis jaleeliana thrives in lateritic grasslands.
- Found at an elevation of **60 meters above sea level**.
- Faces a threat to existence due to habitat destruction caused by mining activities, especially on the **lateritic plateau**.
- Populations are fragmented.

## LOCATION IN NEWS

## Volcano Fagradalsfjall



Recently, the Government of Iceland has confirmed that the volcanic eruption near the **capital Reykjan** poses no threat to human life.

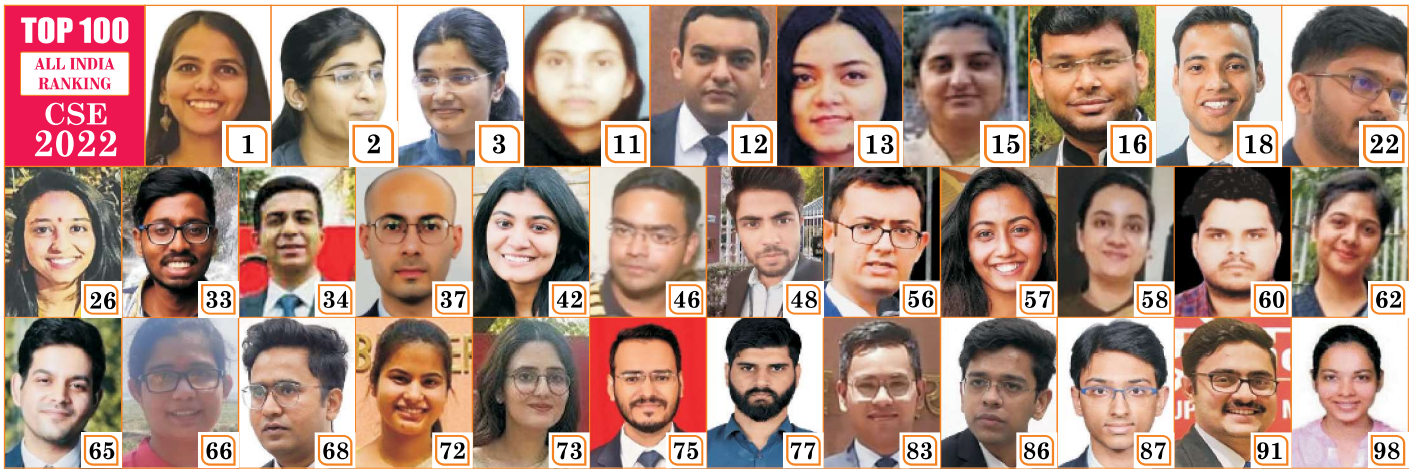
### About:

- Iceland is located on the **Mid-Atlantic Ridge**, technically the longest mountain range in the world, but on the floor of the **Atlantic Ocean**.
- The eruption began between **Sýlingarfell** and **Hagafell**, just north of the fishing town of **Grindavik** which is located on the **Reykjan Peninsula**.

### Iceland: The land of Fire

- Iceland is home to **33 active volcanoes**, the **highest in Europe**. This unique landscape has given Iceland the epithet, '**Land of Fire and Ice**'.
- **Eyjafjallajökull**, one of **Iceland's most famous volcanoes**, erupted in **2010**, causing a widespread **ash cloud**.
- Other notable volcanoes include **Hekla**, **Grímsvötn**, **Hóluhraun**, and **Litli-Hrútur**, part of the Fagradalsfjall system.





**SUCCESS IS A PRACTICE WE DO!**

