

FINDER

FORTUNE IAS NEWS DAILY EXPLAINER



Click here
for daily
MCQs

THE HINDU

What does the new Bill to prevent exam fraud say?

Prelims: General Paper 1

Current events of national and international importance.

Mains: General studies 2

Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Why in Focus?

- The **Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026** was passed after repeated **NEET (National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test) paper leaks** and nationwide protests.
- It seeks to restore **credibility, transparency, and merit-based selection** in public examinations.

Key Highlights:

- The Bill amends the **Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024** to tackle **exam malpractices and organised cheating networks**.
- It mandates **time-bound investigation (within 60 days)** and **speedy trial (within 3 months)** in designated **fast-track courts**.
- Penalties are enhanced: imprisonment increased to **5-10 years** and fines up to **₹50 lakh** for general offences.
- For **organised crime syndicates**, minimum

punishment is **7 years imprisonment** with fines up to **₹10 crore**.

- **Service providers and institutions** face stricter penalties, including fines up to **₹5 crore** and **debarment up to 8 years**.
- Courts are restricted from granting frequent adjournments, and **High Court appeals** must be resolved within **3 months**.
- Background developments include **NEET-UG leaks (2024 & 2026)**, affecting **about 22 lakh students**, with investigations by **CBI (Central Bureau of Investigation)** revealing systemic lapses.

Implications:

- The Bill lacks provisions for **accountability if the 60-day investigation timeline is not met**, weakening enforceability.
- Fixed timelines may clash with **Supreme Court (2002) observations** against rigid deadlines in criminal proceedings.
- **Fast-track courts already face heavy pendency**, raising concerns about practical implementation.
- The earlier 2024 law saw **zero convictions**, indicating issues in enforcement rather than just legal gaps.
- Persistent **administrative bottlenecks** such as police inefficiency, absence of accused/witnesses, and frequent adjournments delay justice.
- Repeated leaks erode **public trust, fairness, and meritocracy**, affecting millions of aspirants.



Way Forward:

- Strengthen **investigative capacity** with better training, coordination, and use of **digital forensics**.
- Expand judicial infrastructure by increasing **judge strength and fast-track courts** with proper monitoring.
- Introduce **advanced technological safeguards** like encryption, AI-based surveillance, and secure logistics for exam papers.
- Ensure **clear accountability mechanisms** by mandating reporting of delays and fixing responsibility.
- Promote **institutional coordination** among Centre, States, **NTA (National Testing Agency)**, and law enforcement agencies.

Mains Question:

“Examination malpractices in India reflect deeper systemic and governance challenges. Critically analyse the role of the Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Amendment Bill, 2026 in addressing these issues.” (15 marks, 250 words)

Is China's AI bet turning U.S. AI labs into new Apple?

Prelims : General Studies Paper I

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies 3

Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.

Why in Focus?

- Chinese companies **Z.ai** and **Moonshot AI** have released advanced **open-weight AI models**, highlighting China's growing role in the global AI race.

Key Highlights

- Chinese companies **Z.ai** and **Moonshot AI** released **GLM-5.2** and **Kimi K3**, respectively, as **open-weight AI models**.

- These models can be **downloaded, modified, and used locally** by individuals and organisations.
- China is promoting **open-weight AI** to encourage **innovation**, wider use, and AI development.
- Due to **U.S. export restrictions** on advanced AI chips, China is increasingly using **domestically developed AI chips** and computing infrastructure.
- **Z.ai** has built a large **AI data centre** using **Chinese-made chips**.
- China plans to expand its AI infrastructure by increasing the use of **domestically produced hardware**.
- China still faces challenges in producing the **most advanced semiconductor technologies**.
- The article suggests that **open-weight AI models** may become widely used for everyday tasks, while **closed-source AI models** may continue to lead in complex tasks.

Implication

- **U.S. export restrictions** on advanced AI chips and semiconductor technology.
- China still depends on foreign technology for some **advanced chip manufacturing**.
- **Open-weight AI models** are generally less capable than the best **closed-source AI models** in complex reasoning.

Way Forward

- Strengthen **domestic AI chip manufacturing** and computing infrastructure.
- Promote **open-weight AI models** to expand AI access and innovation.
- Reduce dependence on foreign AI technologies through **technological self-reliance**.
- Continue investing in **AI research, semiconductors, and data centres**.

Mains Question

China's AI strategy combines open-weight AI models with domestic technology development. Discuss its significance for technological self-reliance and global AI competition. (250 Words)

Why did FIFA scrap its World Cup stake sale?

Prelims : General Studies Paper I

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies 2

Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate

Why in Focus?

- FIFA has withdrawn its proposal to sell **minority stakes** in the **FIFA World Cup** to private investors after strong opposition from **UEFA**, other football confederations, and FIFA officials.

Key Highlights

- FIFA proposed creating a new company called **FIFA Forward Enterprise (FFE)** to manage the **commercial activities** of the **FIFA World Cup**, including **broadcasting, sponsorships, ticketing, and licensing**.
- FIFA planned to sell **minority stakes** in this company to **private investors** while retaining overall control.
- FIFA's 211 member associations** were offered **financial payments** if they approved the proposal.
- UEFA, AFC, CONCACAF, England's FA, and FIFPRO** opposed the proposal, citing concerns over **commercialisation** and **lack of transparency**.
- UEFA** argued that the **FIFA World Cup** is a **global sporting legacy** and should **not be sold to private investors**.
- Following widespread opposition, **FIFA** withdrew the proposal.

CONCACAF - (Confederation of North, Central America and Caribbean Association Football)
AFC - (Asian Football Confederation)
FIFA - Fédération Internationale de Football Association
UEFA - Union of European Football Associations
FIFPRO -Fédération Internationale des Associations de Footballeurs Professionnels (Football Players Worldwide)

Implications

- Concerns over the **commercialisation** of the **FIFA World Cup**.
- By selling minority stakes, **FIFA would allow private investors to share the future financial gains that would otherwise belong entirely to FIFA**.
- Lack of **transparency** in the proposal and decision-making process.
- Opposition from major football bodies over the growing role of **private investors** in global football.
- Risk of commercial interests affecting the **integrity** and **governance of international football**.

Way Forward

- Ensure **transparent** and **inclusive decision-making** involving all **member associations**.
- Preserve the **sporting integrity** and **public character** of the **FIFA World Cup**.
- Strengthen **good governance, accountability, and stakeholder consultation** within **FIFA**.
- Promote sustainable funding** without compromising the values of international football.

Mains Question

Discuss the challenges posed by increasing commercialisation and private investment in global sporting events. Examine its implications for governance and the integrity of international sports institutions such as FIFA. (250 Words)

Why did NCISM clarify the use of the term 'quack'?

Prelims: General Studies Paper 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies 2

Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.



Why in Focus?

- On 29 July, the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM) issued a circular clarifying that qualified and registered practitioners of recognised Indian Systems of Medicine (ISM) cannot legally be described as “quacks” or “bogus doctors” merely because they practise traditional medicine.

Quack: A person who falsely claims to be medically qualified or practises medicine without the required qualifications or legal registration.

Key Highlights

- National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM) is a **statutory body established under the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Act, 2020**, regulating medical education, professional standards, and practitioner registration for:

- ◆ **Ayurveda**
- ◆ **Unani**
- ◆ **Siddha**
- ◆ **Sowa-Rigpa**

Sowa-Rigpa: A traditional Tibetan system of medicine ("Science of Healing") practiced mainly in the Himalayan region, based on balancing the body's three humours—Lung (wind), Tripa (bile), and Beken (phlegm).

- The circular states that practitioners holding recognised degrees such as:
 - ◆ Bachelor of Ayurvedic Medicine and Surgery (BAMS)
 - ◆ Bachelor of Unani Medicine and Surgery (BUMS)
 - ◆ Bachelor of Siddha Medicine and Surgery (BSMS)
 - ◆ Bachelor of Sowa-Rigpa Medicine and Surgery (BSRMS) and registered under the NCISM Act, 2020, are legally recognised medical practitioners and cannot be labelled as “quacks” or “bogus doctors.”
- The **clarification was issued after reports of registered ISM practitioners facing harassment, defamatory public notices, media criticism, and misinformation regarding their legal status.**

- The circular **clearly distinguishes qualified, registered ISM practitioners from unqualified individuals falsely claiming to practise medicine.**
- It **does not equate ISM practitioners with Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) doctors** and does not automatically authorise them to practise modern (allopathic) medicine.

Legal Position

- The **authority of ISM practitioners to prescribe allopathic medicines or practise modern medicine depends on State laws, statutory provisions, government notifications, and judicial decisions.**
- Poonam Verma v. Ashwin Patel (1996):** The Supreme Court held that practising a medical system without the requisite qualification constitutes negligence.
- Dr. Mukhtiar Chand & Others v. State of Punjab (1998):** The Supreme Court ruled that Ayurveda, Siddha, and Unani practitioners cannot practise allopathy solely on the basis of their qualifications; cross-practice is permitted only where expressly authorised by law.

Implications

- Reaffirms statutory recognition of Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha, and Sowa-Rigpa practitioners** under the NCISM Act, 2020.
- Protects registered ISM practitioners** while enabling action against unqualified or fraudulent practitioners.
- Clarifies the distinction between ISM and modern medicine**, reducing legal ambiguity.

Way Forward

- Increase awareness of the legal status** and scope of ISM practitioners.
- Strictly curb unqualified** and fraudulent medical practice.
- Harmonise State rules on cross-practice** while ensuring patient safety.
- Promote evidence-based research, quality education**, and ethical standards in AYUSH.

Mains Question

“The legal recognition of Indian System of Medicine (ISM) practitioners strengthens traditional healthcare systems but raises important questions regarding cross-practice. Discuss with reference to the National Commission for Indian System of Medicine (NCISM) Act, 2020 and relevant Supreme Court judgments.”
(250 Words)

KEYWORDS

Cloudburst



- According to the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)**, a **cloudburst** is **rainfall of 10 cm or more within one hour** over a **small area (20–30 sq. km)**.
- **Global warming** is increasing the likelihood of **cloudbursts**, as a warmer atmosphere can hold more **moisture**.
- Most cloudbursts occur in **remote mountainous regions** such as the **Himalayas** and the **Western Ghats**, leading to **underreporting** due to limited weather stations.
- **Cloudbursts are difficult to forecast**, as meteorologists can predict **heavy rainfall** but not the **exact location** where a cloudburst will occur.
- Unlike **cyclones** and **monsoon systems**, which can be tracked well in advance, **cloudbursts** develop suddenly with **little warning**.

PM SHRI Schools

- **PM SHRI (PM Schools for Rising India)** is a **Centrally Sponsored Scheme** launched by the **Government of India**.

- The scheme aims to develop over **14,500 PM SHRI Schools**, including those managed by **Central, State/UT Governments, local bodies**, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), and Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS).
- The schools will showcase the **implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020** and serve as examples of quality school education.
- The scheme is expected to directly benefit over **20 lakh students** and promote **quality school education**.
- It is being implemented for **five years (2022–23 to 2026–27)**.

Khata



- Khata is a **traditional ceremonial scarf** widely used in **Tibet, Bhutan, Nepal, Mongolia, and the Himalayan Buddhist regions of India**.
- It is traditionally **offered during religious ceremonies, greetings, weddings, festivals, and to honour guests or teachers** as a mark of respect and goodwill.
- Khatas are **commonly made of silk or cotton** and are often **embroidered with the Ashtamangala** (Eight Auspicious Symbols) or the mantra "Om Mani Padme Hum."



- The **white Khata** is the most widely used and symbolises purity, sincerity, and auspiciousness.
- The tradition of the Khata is believed to have **originated from Tibet's indigenous Bon religion** before becoming closely associated with Tibetan Buddhism.

Nasha Mukh Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will **launch the Nasha Mukh Yuva for Viksit Bharat Sankalp Abhiyan on 2 August 2026.**
- The **launch will mark the beginning of a 100-week nationwide Jan Bhagidari** (people's participation) campaign against substance abuse.
- The campaign **aims to inspire youth to stay away from substance abuse** and become ambassadors of positive social change.
- **Weekly activities every Sunday** will include sports events, walkathons, meditation sessions, awareness drives, nukkad natak, and cultural programmes.
- The campaign **will involve MY Bharat volunteers, NSS volunteers, schools, colleges, NGOs, industry bodies, and over 125 spiritual organisations across more than 10,000 locations in India.**

Geological Survey of India (GSI)

- Geological Survey of India (GSI) was **established in 1851 by Sir Thomas Oldham** to identify coal deposits for the railways.
- GSI is an **attached office under the Ministry of Mines** and is headquartered in Kolkata.
- GSI is **responsible for geological mapping, mineral resource assessment, geophysical and geochemical surveys, disaster studies, and geoscientific research.**

- The **organisation provides scientific geological information to support policy-making, mineral exploration, and socio-economic development.**
- **Varsha Ashok Aglawe has assumed charge as the 54th Director General of GSI, becoming the first woman to head the organisation in its 176-year history.**

Firefighter donkeys

- **Grassroots innovation in Spain**, such as the **Tivissa Donkey Firefighters**, has introduced **"firefighter donkeys"** as a tool to control and prevent **wildfires** in European regions.
- The method uses **prescribed targeted grazing**, where donkeys act as **natural weed-cutters**, consuming dry shrubs, weeds, and grasses to create **natural clearings (bio-firebreaks)** that reduce fuel for forest fires.
- **Ecological efficiency** is high as donkeys can consume **up to 10 times more vegetation than goats**, digest coarse and dry plant material, and access **steep and rugged terrain** where machinery cannot operate.
- The initiative provides a **dual benefit** by combining **ecosystem management and animal welfare**, as it rehabilitates **rescued or abandoned working animals** while functioning as a **zero-emission alternative** to fossil-fuel-based clearing methods.
- It represents a **Nature-based Solution (NbS)** for **Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)** and **climate change adaptation**, highlighting a **low-cost, sustainable approach** to eco-restoration and fuel-load management.

Koya tribe

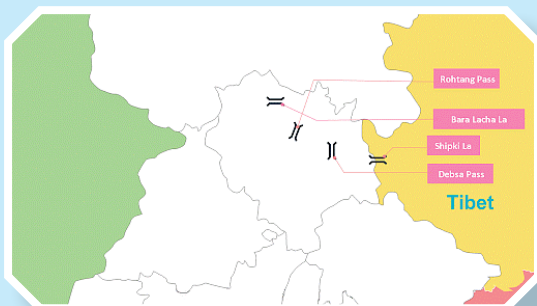
- The **Koya tribe** is a **multi-racial and multi-lingual indigenous community** inhabiting the **forests, plains, and valleys of the Godavari River basin** across **Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chhattisgarh, and Odisha.**

- They speak the **Koya language**, a **Dravidian language** closely related to **Gondi**, and celebrate important **cultural and agricultural festivals** such as **Bhumi Panduga** and the **Sammakka Saralamma Jatara**.
- Their rich cultural heritage includes the **Kommu Koya dance**, where performers traditionally wear **headgear adorned with bison horns**, and the use of a **traditional single-horn flute called Permakore**.
- In a notable **community-led conservation effort**, the tribe is helping protect the **declining Indian Bison (Gaur) population** in the **Papikonda hill range** by replacing **real bison horns** with **eco-friendly palm leaves** in their musical instruments.



Places in News

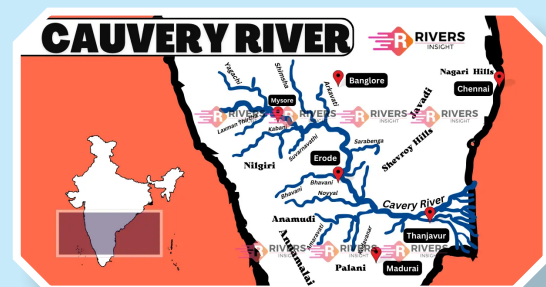
Shipki La



- Shipki La is a **motorable mountain pass** located in the **Kinnaur district of Himachal Pradesh** on the **India–China (Tibet) border**.
- The pass is situated at an altitude of about **3,930 metres** above mean sea level.
- The **Sutlej River** enters India from the **Tibetan Plateau** near the **Shipki La Pass**.
- Shipki La is **one of India's designated border trade points** with **Tibet**, along with **Nathu La (Sikkim)** and **Lipulekh (Uttarakhand)**.

- Historically known as **Pema La ("Shared Gate" or "Shared Pass")**, **Shipki La** served as an **important route** for **cultural and commercial exchanges** between **India and Tibet**.

River Cauvery



- The **Cauvery** is a major **east-flowing inter-State river** in **Southern India** that drains into the **Bay of Bengal**.
- It originates at **Talakaveri** in the **Brahmagiri Hills** of the **Western Ghats** in **Kodagu (Coorg), Karnataka**.
- Its major tributaries in **Karnataka** include **Harangi, Hemavathi, Lakshmanathirtha, Kabini, Shimsha, Arkavathi, and Suvarnavathy**.

- All these rivers **except the Kabini River, Arkavathy River and Suvarnavathy River** rise and flow fully in Karnataka.

Scarborough Shoal

- **Scarborough Shoal**, a **disputed atoll in the South China Sea**, is in the news due to **rising tensions between China and the Philippines**, including China's move to establish a **nature reserve** and deploy **floating barriers** restricting access.
- It is a **triangular-shaped submerged coral atoll** with a central lagoon, located about **120 nautical miles west of Luzon (Philippines)** and over **470 nautical miles from mainland China**, in the **eastern South China Sea**.
- The feature has **competing nomenclature**: internationally called **Scarborough Shoal**, claimed by China as **Huangyan Island (Huangyan Dao)**, and referred to by the Philippines as **Bajo de Masinloc / Panatag Shoal**.
- Under **UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea)**, the shoal lies within the **200-nautical-mile Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)** of the Philippines; the **2016 Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) ruling** invalidated China's **Nine-Dash Line claims** and upheld **traditional fishing rights**, terming Chinese restrictions a violation of international law.
- It holds **high strategic and economic significance** as it lies near key **Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs)** in the Indo-Pacific, serves as a **rich fishing ground**, and acts as a **geopolitical flashpoint** between China and Western-aligned countries in the region.

