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FINDER
FORTUNE IAS NEWS DAILY EXPLAINER

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THE HINDU

How did ISRO pick astronaut candidates and train them for the Gaganyaan mission?

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 3

Science and Technology- developments and their applications and effects in everyday life.

Why in Focus?

- As India prepares for its first human spaceflight mission, **Gaganyaan**, **attention has turned to astronaut selection, training, medical fitness and safety requirements for space travel**.

Key Highlights:

- The **Kármán Line**, located approximately **100 km above sea level**, is widely recognised as the boundary between Earth's atmosphere and outer space.
- **People crossing this boundary** are generally considered astronauts.
- Astronaut selection requires good **physical and mental health, psychological stability, technical skills and professional experience**
- India's **Gaganyaan mission** involves a rigorous selection process conducted by **ISRO and the Indian Air Force**, with medical and psychological evaluations carried out by the **Institute of Aerospace Medicine, Bengaluru**.
- The four astronaut-designates selected for Gaganyaan are **Group Captains Prasanth Balakrishnan Nair, Ajit Krishnan and Angad Pratap, and Wing Commander Shubanshu Shukla**.
- They underwent general training at the **Yuri Gagarin Cosmonaut Training Center, Russia**, including centrifuge training, weightlessness simulation and survival drills.
- **Simulators** recreate **spacecraft conditions on Earth and train astronauts to operate spacecraft systems** and handle emergencies.
- Astronauts undergo **quarantine approximately two weeks before launch** to prevent infections and protect the crew from medical emergencies
- The **development of indigenous astronaut selection and training capabilities will strengthen India's human spaceflight programme** and promote **Bioastronautics**

Bioastronautics: The study of biological, behavioural, and medical aspects of humans living and working in space.

Implications:

- **Developing indigenous capabilities** boosts India's space exploration and **bioastronautics**.
- **ISRO's multi-tiered selection** ensures only the best candidates are chosen.
- **Human spaceflight programmes** promote technological development and international

cooperation.

Way Forward:

- **Continue developing indigenous training capabilities** to support future missions.
- **Enhance collaboration with international space agencies** for advanced training techniques.
- **Invest in research and development** for **bioastronautics** to support long-term space missions.
- **Implement robust health protocols** to ensure astronaut safety and mission success.

Mains Question:

Discuss the selection and training process of astronaut candidates for ISRO's Gaganyaan mission and its significance for India's space exploration capabilities. (250 Words,15 marks)

Taxes, policy uncertainty and lost investor confidence

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 3

Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization, of resources, growth, development and employment.

Why in Focus?

- Despite India's strong economic growth, its **equity markets have underperformed several global markets**, raising concerns about **taxation, regulatory uncertainty and declining investor confidence**.
- The article highlights **whether India's investment policies are becoming less attractive to global investors** and affecting capital inflows and economic growth.

Key Highlights:

- Over the last two years, India's **Nifty 50 declined by 14%**, while **South Korea's KOSPI gained 160%, Pakistan's KSE-100 gained 107% and Taiwan's TAIEX gained 105%**

Nifty 50: A benchmark stock market index of the National Stock Exchange (NSE) that tracks the performance of 50 major companies across different sectors in India.

- Before 2004, investors had to **pay tax on profits earned from selling shares**.
- In 2004, **the government removed tax on long-term profits** from shares and introduced **Securities Transaction Tax** and short-term profits were taxed at 10%.

Securities Transaction Tax (STT): A direct tax levied by the Government of India on the purchase and sale of specified securities, such as shares, derivatives and equity-oriented mutual fund units, carried out through recognised stock exchanges.

- In 2018, **tax on long-term profits was reintroduced at 10%** and increased to **12.5% in 2024**, while short-term tax rose to **20%**
- Investors now face both **capital gains tax and STT**, increasing the overall cost of investing in the stock market.

Capital Gains Tax: A tax levied by the government on the profit earned from the sale or transfer of a capital asset, such as shares, bonds, land or buildings.

- Foreign investors prefer countries with **stable policies, clear rules, easy movement of funds and better returns**.
- **Slow corporate earnings, high stock prices and India's limited presence in emerging sectors** like **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** may make **Indian markets less attractive to foreign investors**.

Implications:

- **Higher taxes make investing more expensive**, which may **discourage investors from putting money** into the stock market.
- **Unpredictable policy environment** deters foreign investors
- **Persistent market underperformance** can gradually affect domestic investor confidence.

Way Forward:

- **Align taxation and regulatory policies** with the objective of deepening capital markets.
- **Ensure stable regulations and sustainable**

returns to attract long-term investment.

- **Create an environment where investors can expect stable rules** and credible regulation.
- **Build investor confidence** through transparent decision-making and predictable rules.

Mains Question:

Examine the impact of policy uncertainty and taxation on investor confidence in India, and suggest measures to create a more predictable and competitive investment environment. (250 Words,15 marks)

How does India address service outages?

Prelims: General Studies 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?

- **Microsoft 365** experienced a global outage from November 12 to 13, affecting services like Outlook.
- The incident **raises questions about the accountability of service providers in India** for such outages.

Key Highlights:

- Microsoft **attributed the outage to a technical fault** during an upgrade of its **network capacity**.
- Under the **CERT-In Directions, 2022**, companies must **report specified cyber incidents** within **6 hours**.
- However, **these directions cover cyberattacks and intrusions, not outages** caused by technical failures.
- The **RBI's IT Outsourcing Directions** require banks using cloud services to **check their dependence on service providers and have a backup plan** to switch providers if needed.
- The **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023** considers **accidental loss of access to personal data** as a **personal data breach**.
- Rules expected to come into effect in **May 2027** require **reporting such breaches to the Data Protection Board and affected individuals**.
- **European Union's law requires cloud companies to report significant incidents**, including outages affecting over 5% or 1 million users.
- **Singapore and South Korea have laws requiring cloud firms to report service interruptions**, setting a precedent for accountability.
- In India, customers **generally depend on their service agreements with providers for compensation,** often in the form of credits against future bills.

Implications:

- Indian laws on reporting service outages are **inadequate, lacking clear requirements for accountability** of cloud service providers.
- The gap in CERT-In's directions **leaves a lack of accountability for outages caused by technical faults**.
- The **absence of clear reporting requirements in India** leads to uncertainty in accountability for service outages.

Way Forward:

- CERT-In could **add major service disruptions to reportable incidents**, enhancing accountability.
- Authorities could consider **outsourcing services to Indian vendors to reduce reliance on foreign companies**.
- **India should establish clear rules on reporting major outages** to benefit users of both foreign and Indian services

Mains Question:

Examine the current legal framework in India for reporting service outages by digital service providers and suggest measures to enhance accountability and consumer protection. (250 Words, 15 marks)

The road to a disease-free

world goes through water

Prelims: General Studies Paper - 1

Current events of national and international importance

Mains: General Studies - 3

Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Why in Focus?

- The upcoming **2026 UN Water Conference**, to be held in **Abu Dhabi, UAE**, highlights the importance of safe water and sanitation in preventing diseases and achieving **Sustainable Development Goal 6 (SDG 6)**.

Sustainable Development Goal 6: A United Nations goal that aims to ensure access to clean water and sanitation for all and promote sustainable water management by 2030.

Key Highlights:

- Since **1988**, **global cases of wild poliovirus have declined** by more than **99%** due to vaccination, disease surveillance and community outreach.
- **Polio spreads through contaminated water and food**, making access to safe drinking water and sanitation essential for preventing its transmission.
- In **2024**, **2.1 billion people lacked safely managed drinking water**, and **3.4 billion lacked safely managed sanitation**.
- **Lack of safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene** contributed to **at least 1.4 million preventable deaths** in 2019.
- **Wastewater surveillance** helps detect pathogens, including poliovirus **enabling early identification of disease outbreaks**.
- **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** can **analyse wastewater data to identify emerging public health risks** and support early intervention.
- **Abu Dhabi uses AI-enabled wastewater surveillance** for this purpose.
- In 2025, the **European Commission** launched the **European Wastewater Surveillance Dashboard** to track the spread of diseases through wastewater monitoring.
- The **Reaching the Last Mile Fund**, established by the **UAE and the Gates Foundation**, supports efforts to eliminate polio and neglected tropical diseases

Implications:

- **Lack of safe water and sanitation can weaken efforts** to eradicate waterborne diseases such as polio.
- **Wastewater surveillance enables early detection of pathogens** and helps prevent large-scale outbreaks.
- **Poor access to sanitation disproportionately** affects marginalised communities and children.

Way Forward:

- **Integrate water infrastructure with health policy** to achieve **SDG 6** and protect public health.
- **Governments, development institutions, and the private sector must collaborate** to bring solutions to communities in need.
- **Investments in sanitation can improve public health** and support sustainable development

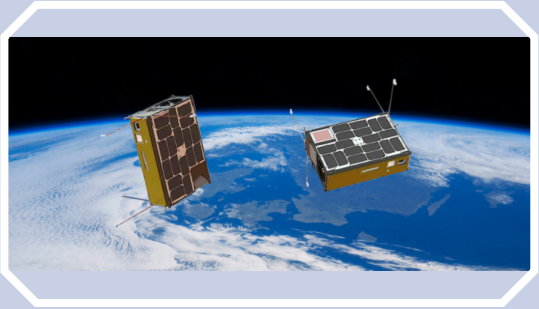
Mains Question:

Discuss the role of water infrastructure in achieving a disease-free world and the challenges in integrating health and water policies for sustainable development. (250 Words,15 words)

KEYWORDS

PhiSat-1

- **Why in News?:** PhiSat-1 is in focus for demonstrating how **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** can process satellite images directly in space, **reducing the need to send unnecessary images** to Earth.
- PhiSat-1 is an **AI-enabled Earth observation satellite** developed under the **European Space Agency (ESA)**.
- It was launched on **3 September 2020** aboard a **Vega rocket** from French Guiana.
- It uses an **onboard AI chip to identify** and remove **cloud-covered images** before sending data to Earth.
- This reduces the amount of unnecessary data transmitted, saving **time, bandwidth and energy**.



National Press Day

- **Why in News?:** National Press Day was observed on **16 November 2026**, and the Press Council of India released the **2026 edition of the Norms of Journalistic Conduct**.
- It is observed every year on **16 November** to recognise the importance of a free and responsible press in a democracy.
- The day marks the beginning of the **Press Council of India (PCI)** on 16 November 1966.
- **PCI is a statutory and autonomous body under the Press Council Act, 1978** to preserve press freedom and maintain journalistic standards.
- **Originally constituted in 1966 under the Indian Press Council Act, 1965**, it was **abolished during the Emergency in 1975 and re-established in 1979**
- The **2026 theme** was **"Journalism: Populist or Responsible"**, highlighting the need for ethical and responsible journalism.

Sachar Committee

- **Why in News?:** The Sachar Committee Report completed **20 years on 17 November 2026**, bringing attention back to the socio-economic condition of Muslims in India.
- The committee was **formed in 2005 under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's government**, with **Justice Rajinder Sachar as its chairman**.
- It was officially known as the **Prime Minister's High Level Committee on Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India**.
- It studied the **social, economic and educational status of Muslims** in India.
- Its 2006 report highlighted their disadvantages in **education, employment, government jobs and access to banking services**.
- It recommended measures such as an **Equal Opportunity Commission**, better access to education and improved employment opportunities.

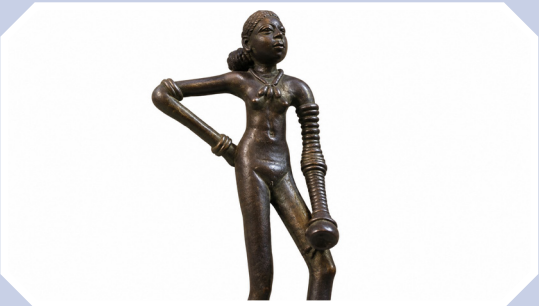
Chenab–Beas Link Tunnel Project

- **Why in News?:** The proposed project has **attracted attention due to concerns that diverting river water** through a tunnel could affect the fragile Himalayan environment.
- The Chenab–Beas Link Tunnel Project aims to divert **surplus water from the Chandra River**, a tributary of the Chenab, into the **Beas River basin** in Himachal Pradesh.
- It involves building an **8.7-km-long tunnel** through the **Pir Panjal Range** and a 19-metre-high barrage near Koksar in Lahaul and Spiti.

- The project is being developed by the **National Hydroelectric Power Corporation (NHPC)** and is estimated to cost around **₹2,352 crore**.
- It aims to **improve water availability and support hydropower generation**.
- However, environmentalists fear that construction could increase the risk of **landslides, floods and damage to the Himalayan ecosystem**.

Dancing Girl of Mohenjo-daro

- **Why in News:?** The 4,500-year-old Dancing Girl, along with the **Nizam's Jewels, Taxila Jewellery collection and Gandhara collection**, will be displayed in the first gallery of the upcoming **Yuge Yugeen Bharat National Museum**.
- It belongs to the **Harappan Civilisation** and was discovered in **1926 at Mohenjo-daro (present-day Pakistan)** by **John Marshall**, then Director-General of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).
- It is a **10.8 cm tall bronze figurine** representing a young female figure standing confidently, with one hand resting on her hip and the other arm hanging down.
- It wears a necklace and several bangles, with **24–25 bangles on the left arm and four on the right**.
- It was made using the **Lost-Wax Casting Technique (Cire Perdue)**, demonstrating the advanced metalworking skills of the Harappans.



Places in News

Aden

- **Why in News:?: Aden was mentioned in the context of the Houthi group's advance towards the area**, which is around 60 kilometres from the city.
- **Aden is a port city in Yemen**, located on the southern coast of the Arabian Peninsula.
- It serves as the **temporary capital of the internationally-recognised Yemeni government**, backed by Saudi Arabia.
- The city is **strategically significant due to its location near the Bab-el-Mandeb strait**, a crucial maritime chokepoint connecting the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Arabian Sea.
- Historically, **Aden was a major trading hub** and was part of the British colony of Aden until 1967



Sea of Azov

- **Why in News?** Ukraine recently claimed to have attacked two oil depots in **Azov** and the **Ilsky oil refinery in Krasnodar, Russia**
- The **Sea of Azov** is an inland sea located between **Ukraine and Russia** in Eastern Europe.
- It is connected to the **Black Sea through the Kerch Strait**.
- The **Don and Kuban rivers** are its major sources of freshwater.
- It is the **shallowest sea in the world**, with a maximum depth of about 14 metres.


SEA OF AZOV
Zaporizhzhya
Ukraine
Donets'k
Rostav-na-Donu
Taganrog
Mariupol
Taganrog Gulf
Don River
Melitopol
EUROPE
Berdyans'k
Teysk
Russia
Genichesk
Sea of Azov
45 m
45 km
Lake Ozera Sivash
Arabatskiy Bay
EUROPE
Ukraine
Kerch
Kuban River
Crimean Peninsula
Taman
Krasnodar
Simferopol
Feodosiya
Feodosiyskiy Bay
Strait of Kerch
Novorossiysk
Russia
Yalta
Black Sea
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