



FORTUNE WEEKLY DIGEST



> INDIA'S CULTURAL OUTREACH > AGRITECH > 130TH CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT BILL

29th JUNE, 2026 - 05th JULY, 2026

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EDITOR'S NOTE

As UPSC aspirants, it is essential to stay updated on current affairs to excel in the examination. This **Fortune Weekly Digest (ForWarD)** brings you the latest news and developments from around the world, carefully curated and analyzed to help you prepare for the Civil Services (Main) Examination.

We understand that time is precious, and we have made sure to present the information in a concise and easy-to-understand manner.

The magazine is divided into different sections. Mains relevant topics have been covered in detail with a UPSC previous year question perspective. The jot downs are examples and interesting facts to enrich your answer writing. Cherrypicks has some key words from the week, helpful again in answer writing and essay. We have also included essay topics and sample questions to help you gauge your preparation.

We have designed this magazine to best supplement the daily current affairs notes we have launched by the name of **FIND (Fortune IAS News Daily)** and **FINDER (Fortune IAS News Daily Explainer)** and the **Fortune Prelims Precise** monthly compilation. This magazine will be explained in detail and your queries addressed in a live class we conduct.

At a time when there is no dearth of current affairs materials, our hope is help you get a one-stop solution for all your current affairs needs.

This magazine is a work in progress and your feedback will be appreciated.

We hope that this magazine will serve as a valuable resource for your exam preparation and contribute to your success in the UPSC examination.

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**FIRST ATTEMPT TOPPERS FROM
OUR PRELIMS CUM MAINS BATCH**

KASTURI SHA
AIR 68

MANJIMA P
AIR 235

FABI RASHEED
AIR 71

SWATHI S BABU
AIR 522

OORMILA J S
AIR 561

W O M E N I N P O W E R

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130TH CONSTITUTION AMENDMENT BILL

Syllabus: GS II - Indian Constitution

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *To what extent, in your view, the Parliament is able to ensure accountability of the executive in India? (2021)*

WHY IN NEWS

The Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) is set to adopt its report on the controversial 130th Constitution Amendment Bill on July 17, 2026. The report is expected to retain a highly debated clause mandating the automatic removal of a Prime Minister, Chief Minister, or minister if they are detained in custody for 30 consecutive days for serious offences.

INTRODUCTION

The **Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill** seeks to strengthen accountability in public office by introducing provisions for the removal of ministers detained for serious criminal offences. Its most debated clause proposes the automatic removal of the Prime Minister, Chief Ministers, and other ministers if they remain in judicial custody for **30 consecutive days**. The Bill has sparked debate over balancing clean governance with due process, the presumption of innocence, and the risk of political misuse.

SHORT TAKES

- **Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC):** A JPC is a temporary committee consisting of members from both the **Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha**, constituted to examine a Bill or a specific issue in detail and submit recommendations to Parliament.
- **Serious Criminal Offence:** Under the **Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill**, a **serious criminal offence** refers to an offence that is **punishable with imprisonment of five years or more** under the law.

CONSTITUTIONAL BASIS

- 🕒 **Articles 84 & 173 – Qualifications for Legislators:** Prescribe the qualifications for becoming Members of Parliament (MPs) and State Legislatures (MLAs/MLCs), while allowing Parliament to prescribe additional qualifications through law.
- 🕒 **Representation of the People Act, 1951:** Lays down additional qualifications and disqualifications for legislators, including disqualification upon conviction for specified offences.
- 🕒 **Articles 102 & 191 – Disqualification of Legislators:** Specify grounds such as office of profit, unsound mind, insolvency, loss of citizenship, and other grounds

prescribed by Parliament.

- 🕒 **Tenth Schedule:** Provides for the disqualification of legislators on the grounds of defection.
- 🕒 **Articles 75(1B) & 164(1B):** Disqualify an MP/MLA disqualified for defection from being appointed as a Union or State Minister until re-election or the expiry of the legislative term.
- 🕒 **No Separate Constitutional Provision for Ministers:** The Constitution does not prescribe independent qualifications or disqualifications for ministers beyond those applicable to legislators.

FEATURES OF THE BILL

- ➔ **About:** A **legislative proposal** aimed at establishing a framework for the removal of ministers, including the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers, who are arrested and held in custody for serious offences.
- ➔ **Scope and Applicability:**
 - **Target Offices** - The provisions of the Bill apply to the Prime Minister, Chief Ministers of states, and any other Minister in the Central or state governments.
 - **Extension to Union Territories** - While the primary 130th Amendment Bill covers the Union Territory of Delhi, two **companion Bills** have been introduced to apply identical provisions to the

Union Territories of **Puducherry and Jammu & Kashmir (J&K)**.

- ➔ **Criteria for Removal of Ministers:**
 - A Minister (other than the Prime Minister or a Chief Minister) will be removed from office if they meet two cumulative conditions-
- ➔ **Nature of the Offence:**
 - They are accused of a serious criminal offence punishable with an imprisonment of five years or more.
- ➔ **Duration of Detention:**
 - They have been arrested and detained in custody for **30 consecutive days**.

➔ **Mechanism of Removal for Union and State Ministers:** Upon meeting the criteria (30 consecutive days of detention for a serious offence), a Minister can be removed through two pathways:

- o **Discretionary Executive Action-** Removal by the President (for Central Ministers) or the Governor (for State Ministers), acting upon the formal advice of the Prime Minister or the Chief Minister, respectively.
- o **Automatic Cessation-** If no executive action is taken, the Minister is automatically removed on

the 31st consecutive day of their detention.

➔ **Mechanism of Removal for the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers:** The Bill mandates a stricter, time-bound protocol for the head of the Union or state governments:

- o **Mandatory Resignation-** The Prime Minister or a Chief Minister must resign from office by the 31st consecutive day of their detention.
- o **Automatic Cessation of Office-** If they fail to resign, they shall automatically cease to hold office starting from the day thereafter (the 31st day).

MERITS

- ☀ **Strengthens accountability in public office:** Ministers accused of serious offences and detained for **30 consecutive days** cannot continue to hold executive office.
- ☀ **Promotes clean and ethical governance:** It prevents individuals facing grave criminal allegations from exercising executive authority during prolonged detention.
- ☀ **Enhances public trust:** Citizens are more likely to have

confidence in a government that acts firmly against criminality in public office.

☀ **Reduces the criminalisation of politics:** The Bill addresses delays in criminal trials that often allow accused politicians to remain in power for years.

☀ **Ensures uniform standards for all governments:** The provisions apply equally to the **Prime Minister, Chief Ministers, and other ministers**, promoting equality and consistency in governance.

CRITICISMS

- ▼ **Violates the presumption of innocence:** A minister may lose office before any court determines guilt or even frames charges.
- ▼ **Can be misused for political vendetta:** Governments may use investigative agencies to target political opponents through prolonged detention.
- ▼ **Undermines parliamentary democracy:** The removal of the Prime Minister or Chief Minister should depend on the confidence of the legislature, not on arrest and

detention.

▼ **Weakens the principle of separation of powers:** Investigative agencies may indirectly influence the tenure of elected governments through the power of arrest.

▼ **Raises concerns over federalism:** A Union or State investigative agency could potentially trigger the removal of a government at another level, affecting the federal balance.

WAY FORWARD

- ✱ **Link removal to judicial scrutiny:** Automatic removal should occur only after a court frames charges or confirms a prima facie case for serious offences.
- ✱ **Provide safeguards against misuse:** Independent judicial oversight should review arrests and detention before the removal provisions are triggered.
- ✱ **Limit the Bill to heinous offences:** The provisions should apply only to grave crimes such as corruption, terrorism, rape, and offences against the State.
- ✱ **Preserve parliamentary accountability:** The removal of the Prime Minister or Chief Minister should involve legislative approval, such as a confidence vote, instead of being solely based on detention.
- ✱ **Ensure a transparent and time-bound process:** Clear procedural safeguards, the right to appeal, and speedy judicial review should be incorporated to protect both accountability and constitutional principles

CONCLUSION

The **Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill** is a significant step towards promoting accountability and integrity in public office. However, its provisions must uphold constitutional principles, due process, and democratic norms while preventing political misuse. A balanced approach can ensure both clean governance and the protection of constitutional democracy.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) "The criminalisation of politics requires stronger legal reforms, but such reforms must not undermine constitutional principles." Discuss in the context of the Constitution (130th Amendment) Bill.
(10 marks) (150 words)

AGRITECH AND CLIMATE-RESILIENT TECHNOLOGIES FOR FARMER WELFARE

Syllabus: GS III - Indian Economy

PYQ MAPPING

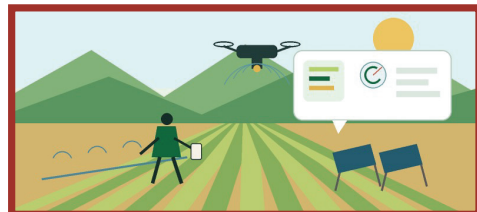
Q) What are the present challenges before crop diversification? How do emerging technologies provide an opportunity for crop diversification? (2021)

WHY IN NEWS

AgriTech and climate-resilient farming are gaining attention as Indian agriculture faces rising climate risks, resource degradation and the need to improve farmers' productivity and incomes.

INTRODUCTION

AgriTech combines digital tools, scientific innovation and climate-smart farming to improve productivity, reduce risks and enhance farmers' income. Its importance is increasing as agriculture supports **over 46% of India's population** and contributes nearly **18% of national GVA**, while facing droughts, floods, soil degradation and unpredictable rainfall.



WHY DOES TRANSFORMATION MATTER?

⚡ Agriculture supports over 46% of India's population and contributes nearly 18% of national GVA. But erratic rainfall, droughts, floods and soil degradation

are making farm decisions more uncertain. ⚡ Agricultural GVA rose from ₹15.0 lakh crore in 2011-12 to ₹53.9 lakh crore in 2024-25.

IMPORTANCE OF AGRITECH

3,000

climate-resilient crop varieties developed

109 lakh ha

covered under micro-irrigation since 2015-16

25.79 crore

Soil Health Cards issued by March 2026

1.80 crore

farmers connected to e-NAM

Higher productivity and efficient input use:

- Precision farming uses **GPS, drones, sensors and IoT devices** to apply water, fertilisers and pesticides according to crop requirements.
- **Example:** Soil-moisture sensors and drip irrigation prevent excess water use and support the goal of **"More Crop per Drop."**

Climate resilience:

- Under the **National Innovations in Climate Resilient Agriculture programme**, nearly **3,000 climate-resilient crop varieties** have been developed and **448 Climate-Resilient Villages** were established between 2014 and 2025.

Better weather and farm advisories:

- Early rainfall warnings help farmers delay irrigation or harvest crops before cyclones and heavy rainfall, it can be done with help of Satellite imagery, remote sensing and mobile applications.

Disaster preparedness:

- GIS-based platforms and automatic weather stations provide alerts for floods, droughts, heatwaves and pest outbreaks.

Improved irrigation efficiency:

- Under the **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana**, around **109 lakh hectares** have been covered under micro-irrigation since 2015-16, with assistance of over **₹26,325 crore**.

Better soil management through Digital soil mapping and Soil Health Cards:

- **Data:** More than **25.79 crore Soil Health Cards** had been issued and around **11,531 soil-testing laboratories** established by March 2026.

Improved market access:

- By February 2026, **e-NAM** had integrated **1,656 mandis**, around **1.80 crore farmers**, **2.72 lakh traders** and **4,724 FPOs**. Its cumulative trade value exceeded **₹4.82 lakh crore**.

Digital agricultural governance:

- o The **Digital Agriculture Mission**, launched in 2024 with an outlay of **₹2,817 crore**, promotes Farmer IDs, digital crop surveys, geospatial mapping and

AI-based agricultural services.

- o More than **9.20 crore Farmer IDs** had reportedly been generated by March 2026.

CHALLENGES OF AGRITECH AND CLIMATE-RESILIENT AGRICULTURE

- ✧ **Digital divide:** Although over **9.20 crore Farmer IDs** were generated by March 2026, farmers without smartphones or digital skills may remain excluded.
- ✧ **High cost of technology:** Drones, sensors, automated irrigation systems and satellite-based services are often unaffordable for small and marginal farmers.
- ✧ **Limited adoption of micro-irrigation:** Around **109 lakh hectares** have been covered under micro-irrigation since 2015–16 with assistance of over **₹26,325 crore**, but wider adoption is still needed.
- ✧ **Weak last-mile delivery:** Scientific information may not reach farmers in understandable regional languages or at the right time.
- ✧ **Exclusion of tenant and women farmers:** Digital schemes based on formal land records may exclude sharecroppers, tenants and women who cultivate land without ownership titles.
- ✧ **Data privacy concerns:** Farmer IDs, digital crop surveys and GIS-based land records create risks of data misuse and unauthorised commercial exploitation.
- ✧ **Insufficient market integration:** Digital platforms may not fully overcome poor storage, transport, grading and bargaining power.
- o e-NAM has connected **1,656 mandis, 1.80 crore farmers and 4,724 FPOs**, with trade exceeding **₹4.82 lakh crore**, but physical market infrastructure remains essential.

WAY FORWARD

- ✧ **Strengthen rural digital infrastructure:** Expand broadband, electricity and affordable smartphones under programmes such as **BharatNet**.
- ✧ **Promote technology as a service:** Provide drones, sensors and machinery through **Custom Hiring Centres, cooperatives and FPOs** instead of requiring individual ownership.
- ✧ **Improve farmer training:** Use Krishi Vigyan Kendras, Panchayats and agricultural universities for practical demonstrations and digital-literacy programmes. **Example:** Farmers can be trained to interpret Soil Health Cards and use mobile-based pest advisories.
- ✧ **Expand climate-resilient research:** Increase investment in drought-, flood-, heat- and pest-resistant crop varieties.
- o NICRA has supported nearly **3,000 climate-resilient varieties** and **448 Climate-Resilient Villages**.
- ✧ **Scale up efficient irrigation:** Provide credit, subsidies and technical support for drip irrigation, sprinklers and rainwater harvesting.
- o PMKSY's **"More Crop per Drop"** approach can reduce water use while maintaining productivity.
- ✧ **Create a farmer-centric data framework:** Ensure informed consent, data portability, privacy protection and grievance redressal for digital agricultural platforms.
- ✧ **Strengthen agricultural value chains:** Invest in rural warehouses, cold chains, processing, transport and digital market linkages.

CONCLUSION

AgriTech will improve farmer welfare only when it is **affordable, inclusive, locally suitable and supported by strong institutions**, rather than being limited to technology deployment alone.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) Digitalisation of agriculture must be farmer-centric rather than technology-centric. Comment with suitable examples. **(10 marks) (150 words)**

INDIAN OCEAN DIPOLE AND EL NIÑO: COMPETING DRIVERS OF THE INDIAN MONSOON

Syllabus: GS I - Geographical Phenomena

PYQ MAPPING

Q) *Most of the unusual climatic happenings are explained as an outcome of the El-Nino effect. Do you agree?" (2014)*

WHY IN NEWS

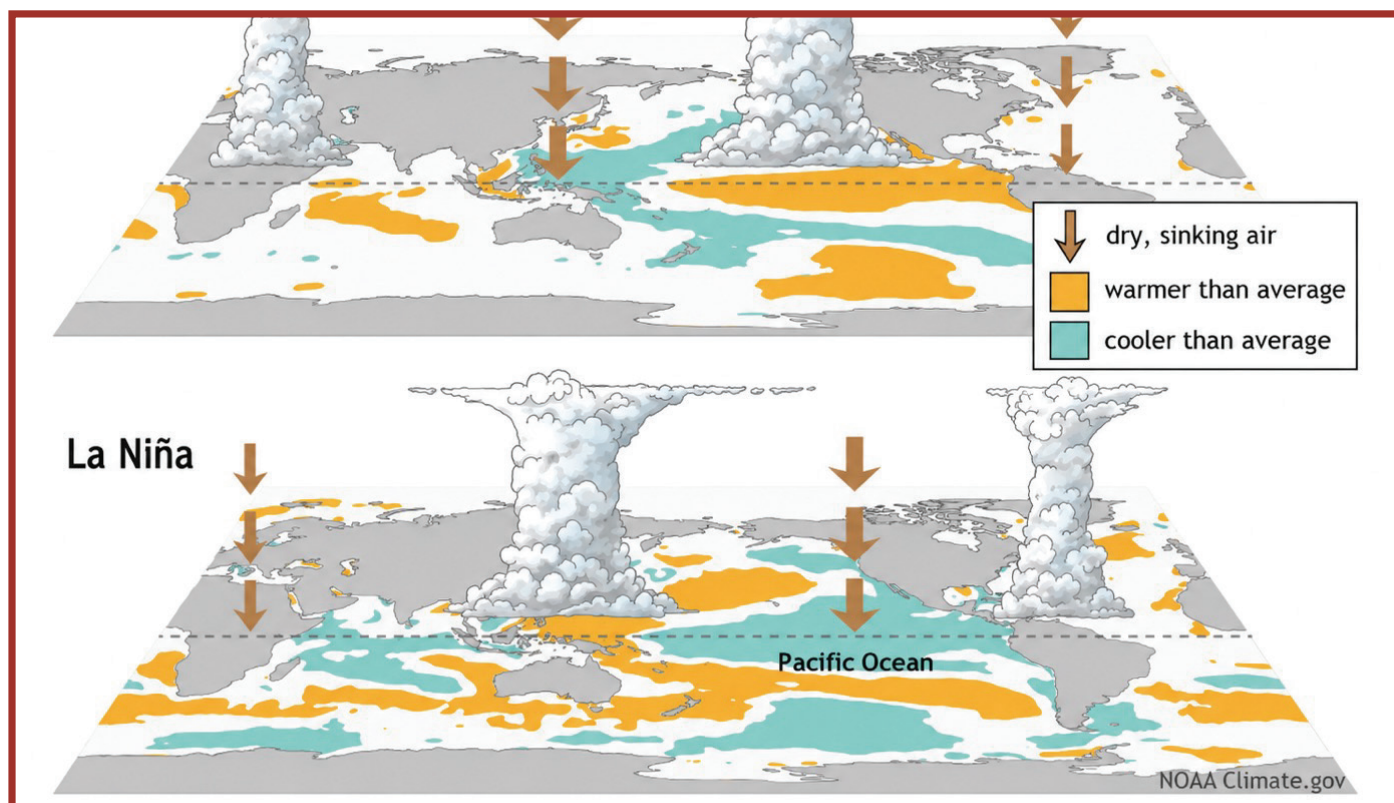
The possible development of a **positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD)** raised expectations that it could partly offset the adverse impact of **El Niño** on the Indian monsoon. However, the interaction between these ocean-atmosphere phenomena is complex, and a positive IOD does not automatically guarantee normal rainfall.

INTRODUCTION

- The Indian monsoon is influenced not only by local weather conditions but also by changes in sea-surface temperatures and atmospheric pressure across distant oceans. Two important climatic phenomena affecting India are the **El Niño–Southern Oscillation in the Pacific Ocean** and the **Indian Ocean Dipole in the Indian Ocean**.
- Understanding their interaction is essential for forecasting rainfall, planning agriculture, managing water resources and preparing for droughts and floods.

What is El Niño?	What is La Niña?
➤ El Niño refers to the unusual warming of the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. It is the warm phase of the El Niño–Southern Oscillation, or ENSO, and usually occurs every two to seven years. ➤ Under normal conditions, easterly trade winds push warm surface water towards the western Pacific near Indonesia and Australia. Cold, nutrient-rich water rises along the western coast of South America. ➤ During El Niño, these trade winds weaken or reverse. Warm water moves eastward towards the central and eastern Pacific, reducing the normal upwelling of cold water. This alters global atmospheric circulation and rainfall patterns. ➤ Impact of El Niño ○ Weakening of the Indian summer monsoon and increased drought risk. ○ Droughts in Australia, Indonesia and parts of South Asia. ○ Increased rainfall in parts of South America, the southern United States and the Horn of Africa. ○ Marine ecosystem disruption due to reduced nutrient upwelling near South America. ○ Higher probability of global temperature records because additional oceanic heat is released into the atmosphere. However, not every El Niño year produces drought in India, as the monsoon is also influenced by the IOD, Eurasian snow cover, local sea temperatures and intra-seasonal weather systems.	➤ La Niña is the cold phase of ENSO and is characterised by unusually cool sea-surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific. ➤ During La Niña, trade winds strengthen and push more warm water towards Asia. This increases the upwelling of cold, nutrient-rich water along the western coast of the Americas. ➤ Impact of La Niña ○ La Niña generally- ○ Supports stronger monsoon rainfall over India. ○ Causes heavy rainfall and flooding in Australia and parts of Southeast Asia. ○ Increases drought risk in Peru and Ecuador. ○ Influences winter temperatures and storm patterns in North America. ○ May contribute to a more active Atlantic hurricane season. Nevertheless, La Niña does not always produce uniformly high rainfall across India, as rainfall distribution depends on several regional and global factors.

EL NIÑO–SOUTHERN OSCILLATION



ENSO HAS THREE PHASES:

Phase	Pacific Ocean condition	General impact on Indian monsoon
El Niño	Abnormal warming	Often weakens monsoon rainfall
La Niña	Abnormal cooling	Generally supports monsoon rainfall
Neutral phase	Near-normal temperatures	No strong ENSO influence

- ENSO is not only an oceanic event. It involves a coupled interaction between sea-surface temperature, air pressure, winds and rainfall across the tropical Pacific.

WHAT IS THE INDIAN OCEAN DIPOLE?

- ♣ The Indian Ocean Dipole is an ocean–atmosphere phenomenon involving a difference in sea-surface temperatures between the western Indian Ocean near Africa and the eastern Indian Ocean near Indonesia.
- ♣ It is sometimes called the **Indian Niño** because its functioning resembles ENSO, though it occurs in the Indian Ocean.
- ♣ **Positive IOD**
 - A positive IOD develops when-
 - The western Indian Ocean becomes warmer than normal.
 - The eastern Indian Ocean near Indonesia becomes cooler than normal.
 - Convection and rainfall shift towards the western Indian Ocean.
 - It generally increases rainfall over East Africa and can support rainfall over India, while reducing rainfall over Indonesia and Australia.
- ♣ **Negative IOD**
 - A negative IOD develops when-
 - The eastern Indian Ocean becomes warmer than normal.
 - The western Indian Ocean becomes cooler than normal.
 - Rainfall shifts towards Indonesia and surrounding regions.
 - It can suppress rainfall over parts of India and East Africa while increasing rainfall over Indonesia and Australia

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EL NIÑO AND IOD

- ★ ENSO and IOD occur in different ocean basins, but they are interconnected through atmospheric circulation.
- ★ Strong El Niño conditions may favour the development of a positive IOD by altering winds and sea-surface temperatures over the Indian Ocean. Similarly, the IOD can influence regional weather and potentially modify the impact of El Niño.
- ★ A positive IOD may partly compensate for El Niño-induced monsoon weakness by strengthening convection over the western Indian Ocean and supporting moisture flow towards India.
- ★ However, its ability to offset El Niño depends on-
 - The strength and timing of both events.
 - Their overlap with the monsoon season.
 - Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal temperatures.
 - Formation of monsoon depressions.
 - Regional distribution of rainfall.
- ★ Therefore, a positive IOD cannot be treated as a guaranteed safeguard against drought.

SIGNIFICANCE FOR INDIA

- 🌾 **Agriculture:** A weak monsoon can delay sowing, reduce crop yields and increase irrigation demand. Rain-fed crops such as pulses, oilseeds and coarse cereals are particularly vulnerable.
- 🌾 **Water security:** El Niño-related rainfall deficits can reduce reservoir levels, groundwater recharge and drinking-water availability.
- 🌾 **Food inflation:** Lower agricultural production may increase the prices of vegetables, cereals and pulses, affecting household food security.
- 🌾 **Disaster management:** While El Niño may raise drought risk, a strong positive IOD can generate intense rainfall in some regions. India must therefore prepare for both rainfall deficiency and extreme rainfall events.
- 🌾 **Energy sector:** Low reservoir levels can reduce hydropower production, while heatwaves increase electricity demand for cooling and irrigation.

WAY FORWARD

- ✳ **Improve climate forecasting:** Integrate ENSO, IOD, soil moisture, snow cover and regional sea-surface temperature data for more accurate monsoon predictions.
- ✳ **Provide localised advisories:** Deliver district- and crop-specific guidance through mobile apps, Krishi Vigyan Kendras and Panchayats.
Example: Advisories can guide farmers on sowing dates, irrigation schedules and drought-resistant varieties.
- ✳ **Strengthen water security:** Expand watershed development, rainwater harvesting, micro-irrigation and groundwater recharge.
Example: Drip irrigation can reduce water wastage in drought-prone regions.
- ✳ **Promote crop diversification:** Encourage millets, pulses and oilseeds instead of excessive dependence on water-intensive crops such as paddy and sugarcane.
- ✳ **Build drought preparedness:** Maintain food reserves, fodder banks, seed banks and contingency crop plans before the monsoon season.
- ✳ **Update forecasts continuously:** Since ENSO and IOD conditions can change during the monsoon, advisories should be revised regularly rather than relying only on seasonal forecasts.
- ✳ **Strengthen crop insurance:** Use weather data, satellites and remote sensing for faster crop-loss assessment and timely compensation.

CONCLUSION

El Niño and IOD jointly influence the Indian monsoon, but their impact varies with timing and intensity. India must therefore strengthen climate-resilient farming, water management and disaster preparedness.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) “A positive Indian Ocean Dipole may moderate the impact of El Niño on the Indian monsoon, but it cannot completely neutralise it.” Explain the mechanisms of ENSO and IOD and examine their implications for India. **(15 marks) (250 words)**

INDIA'S CULTURAL OUTREACH: HERITAGE AS A BRIDGE OF DIPLOMACY

Syllabus: GS I - Indian Art & Heritage

PYQ MAPPING

Q) "Safeguarding the Indian art heritage is the need of the moment. Discuss." (2018)

INTRODUCTION

- India's cultural outreach refers to the use of its civilisational heritage, traditions, arts, knowledge systems and people-to-people connections to build international goodwill.
- The Prambanan initiative shows that diplomacy is not confined to trade, defence or strategic partnerships. Shared traditions, epics and monuments can create emotional bonds between nations and strengthen modern bilateral relations.

WHY IN NEWS

During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Indonesia in July 2026, India and Indonesia inaugurated a joint conservation and restoration project for the **Prambanan Temple Complex**, a UNESCO World Heritage Site in Yogyakarta. The initiative highlights India's growing use of shared cultural heritage as an instrument of diplomacy.



PRAMBANAN

- Prambanan is Indonesia's largest Hindu temple complex and was built around the **10th century**.
- Its principal temples are dedicated to **Shiva, Vishnu and Brahma**.
- The complex contains reliefs depicting episodes from the **Ramayana**.
- India and Indonesia exchanged a Letter of Intent for India-assisted conservation and restoration of the complex.

MAJOR INSTRUMENTS OF INDIA'S CULTURAL OUTREACH

Heritage diplomacy:

- India supports the conservation of monuments and cultural sites with historical links to Indian civilisation.
- Example:** The Prambanan restoration project strengthens India-Indonesia relations while preserving a shared cultural legacy.

Buddhist diplomacy:

- India uses its status as the birthplace of Buddhism to deepen ties with countries such as Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Mongolia, Japan and Southeast Asian nations.
- Examples:** Buddhist pilgrimages, relic exhibitions, international conferences and development of the Buddhist Circuit.

Yoga and traditional knowledge:

- Yoga has become one of India's most visible contributions to global well-being.
- Example:** The International Day of Yoga, observed

annually on 21 June, has created a global cultural connection with India.

Epics, language and performing arts:

- The **Ramayana** and **Mahabharata** are part of the cultural traditions of several Southeast Asian countries.
- Example:** The Ramayana reliefs at Prambanan demonstrate the localisation of Indian epics within Indonesian culture.

Indian diaspora:

- The diaspora acts as a living cultural bridge by popularising Indian festivals, food, cinema, languages and traditions.
- Examples:** Public celebrations of Deepavali, Holi, Onam and Vaisakhi improve India's visibility and encourage people-to-people relations.

Cinema, cuisine and creative industries:

- Indian cinema, music, fashion, handicrafts and food have a wide international audience.

- o Digital streaming platforms have expanded the reach of Bollywood and regional cinema, presenting India as both traditional and contemporary.

- o The Indian Council for Cultural Relations promotes Indian culture through scholarships, cultural centres, academic chairs, performances and exchange programmes.

 Educational and institutional outreach:

CHALLENGES

- ▼ **Symbolism without continuity:** High-profile visits and festivals may have limited impact without sustained institutional engagement.
- ▼ **Narrow cultural representation:** Excessive focus on a few classical traditions can overlook tribal, folk, northeastern and regional cultures.
- ▼ **Fragmented coordination:** Cultural initiatives are handled by multiple ministries, institutions and state governments without a unified strategy.
- ▼ **Limited funding and expertise:** Heritage conservation requires specialised professionals, long-term funding

and local participation.

- ▼ **Cultural appropriation:** Yoga, Ayurveda and traditional knowledge may be commercially used without adequate recognition or benefit-sharing.
- ▼ **Balancing heritage and modernity:** India must promote ancient traditions alongside contemporary cinema, literature, design, science and youth culture.
- ▼ **Political sensitivity:** Shared heritage should be presented inclusively and must not be used to impose cultural ownership on partner countries.

WAY FORWARD

- * **National Cultural Diplomacy Strategy:** Integrate culture with foreign policy, tourism, education and trade.
- * **Expand Heritage Partnerships:** Undertake more joint conservation projects, especially in Southeast Asia and the Indian Ocean region.
- * **Inclusive Cultural Representation:** Promote regional, tribal and folk traditions along with classical art forms.
- * **Use Digital Platforms:** Develop virtual museums, digital archives and multilingual content to engage global youth.
- * **Strengthen Partnerships and Protection:** Collaborate with universities, museums, artists and the diaspora while safeguarding traditional knowledge through intellectual-property rights and benefit-sharing.

CONCLUSION

The Prambanan project demonstrates that India's cultural outreach can connect ancient civilisational links with contemporary diplomatic objectives. India's cultural influence will be most effective when it is based on partnership, preservation and mutual respect. India's culture should not merely showcase its past; it should serve as a bridge for building future partnerships.

SAMPLE QUESTION

Q) "Heritage conservation has emerged as an important instrument of India's cultural diplomacy and Act East Policy." Discuss with suitable examples. **(10 marks) (150 words)**

WEEKLY DOSSIERS

A NEW ERA OF WILDLIFE ECOLOGY IN INDIA

Introduction

The **Second Indian Wildlife Ecology Conference (IWECC 2026)** at Ashoka University highlighted how Indian wildlife ecology is evolving from merely documenting biodiversity to **predicting ecological change** driven by climate change, habitat fragmentation, invasive species, and rapid development.

Key Highlights

- ◆ **Shift Towards Predictive Ecology**
 - Focus is moving from *"What biodiversity exists?"* to *"How will biodiversity respond to future changes?"*
 - Uses evolutionary history, long-term monitoring, and ecological modelling.
- ◆ **Role of Technology and Citizen Science**
 - Platforms like **eBird India** help track species distribution and migration.
 - AI, genomics, environmental DNA (eDNA), and remote sensing are expanding ecological research.
- ◆ **Climate Change and Biodiversity**
 - Vulnerable ecosystems such as montane grasslands face threats from rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, and extreme weather.
 - Physiological studies help assess species' climate resilience.
- ◆ **Conservation Beyond Protected Areas**
 - Experts advocated **landscape-level conservation**, integrating biodiversity protection with livelihoods and climate resilience.
 - Strong local institutions and community

participation remain crucial.

◆ Interdisciplinary Approach

- Ecology is increasingly linked with public health, genetics, economics, and governance.
- Issues like free-ranging dogs and snakebite mortality require multi-sectoral solutions.

Way Forward

- ◆ **Strengthen long-term ecological monitoring** through permanent field stations and biodiversity observatories.
Example: Long-Term Ecological Observatories (LTEO) under the Ministry of Environment.
- ◆ **Promote citizen science initiatives** to generate large-scale biodiversity data.
Example: eBird India and the Great Backyard Bird Count.
- ◆ **Adopt landscape-level conservation** beyond protected areas to maintain habitat connectivity.
Example: Elephant corridors in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve.
- ◆ **Integrate technology with field ecology** for better monitoring and prediction.
Example: Use of eDNA for detecting rare species and AI-enabled camera traps for wildlife monitoring.
- ◆ **Mainstream biodiversity into development planning** to balance conservation and growth.
Example: Ecosystem-based management under the Green India Mission.

Conclusion

Indian wildlife ecology is transitioning from descriptive biodiversity studies to predictive, interdisciplinary conservation science for climate-resilient ecosystems.

PROTEIN BIOSENSORS: REVOLUTIONISING RAPID DISEASE DIAGNOSIS

Introduction

Protein biosensors are advanced diagnostic devices that detect disease-related proteins in real time, enabling **early diagnosis and timely treatment** of conditions such as sepsis, cancer, heart attacks, and infections. They combine biological recognition elements with electronic signal-processing systems.

Why are Protein Biosensors Important?

- ◆ Proteins regulate almost every biological process in the body.
- ◆ Changes in protein levels often occur before visible symptoms appear.
- ◆ Rapid detection can significantly improve treatment outcomes.

Examples

- ◆ **Troponin:** Heart attack marker.
- ◆ **Procalcitonin:** Bacterial infection marker.
- ◆ **Cancer biomarkers:** Early tumour detection.
- ◆ **Inflammatory proteins:** Sepsis diagnosis.

Key Technological Advances

◆ Aptamer-Based Detection

- Aptamers are synthetic DNA/RNA strands that bind specific proteins. They are cheaper, more stable, and easier to manufacture than antibodies.
- **Example:** Aptamers have been developed for hundreds of disease-relevant proteins.

◆ Nanotechnology Integration

- Use of gold nanoparticles, graphene, carbon nanotubes, and MXenes. Enhances sensitivity and allows detection of proteins at extremely low concentrations.
- **Example:** Gold-silver nanostructure-based biosensors for sepsis detection.

◆ CRISPR-Enabled Biosensors

- CRISPR amplifies detection signals when target proteins bind. Improves accuracy and speed.
- **Example:** Detection of malaria, COVID-19, and cancer biomarkers.

◆ Wearable and Implantable Biosensors

- Continuous monitoring of health parameters. Real-time data transmission to smartphones or healthcare providers.
- **Example:** Aptamer-coated microneedle patches for monitoring cardiac and inflammatory conditions.

Applications

Sector	Application
Healthcare	Sepsis, cancer, heart attack diagnosis
Public Health	Epidemic surveillance
Environment	Heavy metal and pollutant detection
Food Safety	Detection of pathogens and antibiotic residues
Defence	Biological threat detection

Way Forward

- ◆ **Develop AI-integrated biosensors** for real-time clinical decision-making.
Example: AI-assisted sepsis detection platforms.
- ◆ **Promote wearable and implantable biosensors** for continuous health monitoring.
Example: Microneedle-based protein monitoring patches.
- ◆ **Improve sensor stability and shelf life** through advanced biomaterials.
Example: Heat-resistant aptamer technologies.
- ◆ **Scale up manufacturing and reduce costs** for wider healthcare access.
Example: Lab-produced aptamer-based sensors replacing expensive antibodies.
- ◆ **Strengthen clinical validation and regulatory pathways** for faster adoption.
Example: Integration of protein biosensors into emergency and ICU settings.

Conclusion

Protein biosensors represent the next generation of diagnostics, enabling rapid, real-time detection of diseases through the convergence of biotechnology, nanotechnology, AI, and precision medicine.

AFFORESTATION AS A CLIMATE ADAPTATION STRATEGY IN KARNATAKA

Introduction

Environmentalists have highlighted that **rising temperatures, heatwaves, and biodiversity loss in northern Karnataka** are linked to declining tree cover and climate change. Kalaburagi and surrounding regions recorded temperatures of **44–45.5°C during summer 2026**, underscoring the need for large-scale afforestation.

Key Concerns

◆ Intensifying Heatwaves

- Reduced tree cover increases land surface temperatures. Loss of shade and evapotranspiration worsens heat stress. Northern Karnataka is increasingly experiencing extreme summer temperatures.
- **Example:** Ainapur (Chincholi Taluk) recorded **45.5°C** in 2026.

◆ Biodiversity Loss

- Climate change threatens pollinators such as butterflies and bees. Decline in pollinators affects ecosystem stability and agricultural productivity.
- **Example:** Coffee and honey production depend heavily on pollination services.

◆ Ecosystem Degradation

- Deforestation reduces carbon sequestration. Increases soil erosion and water stress. Weakens resilience against climate-induced disasters.

Way Forward

- ◆ **Promote large-scale afforestation in heat-prone regions.**

Example: Karnataka's participation in the **Ek Ped Maa Ke Naam** campaign.

- ◆ **Restore native and degraded ecosystems instead of monoculture plantations.**

Example: Restoration of dry deciduous forests in the

Deccan Plateau.

- ◆ **Protect pollinator habitats through biodiversity-friendly plantations.**

Example: Planting native flowering species to support butterflies and bees.

- ◆ **Integrate urban and rural green infrastructure into climate action plans.**

Example: Nagar Van Yojana and Miyawaki urban forests.

- ◆ **Encourage community and school-led conservation initiatives.**

Example: Van Mahotsav plantation drives involving students and local communities.

Conclusion

Afforestation is a cost-effective nature-based solution that mitigates heatwaves, conserves biodiversity, and enhances climate resilience in vulnerable regions like northern Karnataka.

BEYOND VERDICTS: KEY JUDICIAL INTERVENTIONS

Supreme Court on Foreigners Tribunal Proceedings

- ◆ In ***Sabitri Dey @ Swasthi Dey v. Union of India (2026)***, the Supreme Court held that **non-appearance before a Foreigners Tribunal alone cannot justify declaring a person a foreigner**.
- ◆ Although **Section 9 of the Foreigners Act, 1946** places the burden of proving citizenship on the individual, the Tribunal must still ensure proper notice, examine evidence, and pass a reasoned order. The Court emphasized that **Articles 14 and 21** guarantee fairness and due process to every person, including those facing citizenship inquiries. Consequently, it set aside the ex parte orders and directed fresh adjudication.

Supreme Court on Granting Relief Beyond Pleadings under Article 226

- ◆ In ***Union of India v. Bali Ram (2026)***, the Supreme Court held that while High Courts generally confine themselves to the pleadings and reliefs sought, they may grant **wider relief under Article 226** in exceptional cases to prevent injustice.
- ◆ Such relief can be granted when the record clearly shows a legal entitlement, the respondent suffers no prejudice, procedural technicalities are being used to shield a statutory breach, and denying relief would defeat a substantive right.
- ◆ However, the Court cautioned that this power should be exercised **sparingly and judiciously**, balancing substantive justice with judicial discipline. The ruling came while upholding reinstatement benefits granted to a disabled CRPF constable despite his petition seeking only disability pension.

Protest is a Hallmark of Democracy: Madras High Court

- ◆ In ***Krishnamoorthy v. State (2026)***, the Madras High Court quashed criminal proceedings against a farmer who participated in a peaceful hunger strike seeking withdrawal of cases against a farmers' association leader. The Court held that **raising slogans and peaceful protest are protected under Articles 19(1)(a) and 19(1)(b)** and are a hallmark of democracy. Since there was no evidence of public inconvenience, obstruction, or violation of any

prohibitory order, the Court ruled that continuing the prosecution would amount to an abuse of the legal process.

Recovery of Dead Body Not Essential for Murder Conviction: Supreme Court

- ◆ In *Debojit Pankika Charaideo Sonari v. State of Assam (2026)*, the Supreme Court held that **recovery of a dead body is not mandatory for a murder conviction** if a complete and reliable chain of circumstantial evidence establishes the crime. The Court clarified that *corpus delicti* means proof that a murder has occurred, not necessarily recovery of the victim's body. Upholding the conviction, the Court relied on credible witness testimony, the accused's suspicious conduct, and his failure to explain the disappearance of the child who was under his exclusive care.

Deletion from Electoral Roll Does Not Mean Loss of Citizenship: Supreme Court

- ◆ In *Prasenjit Bose v. Election Commission of India (2026)*, the Supreme Court held that **removal from the electoral roll does not automatically lead to loss of citizenship**. The Court clarified that the **Election Commission cannot determine citizenship**, which can only be decided by competent authorities under the **Citizenship Act**.

ETHICS - CASE STUDY

Q) You are the District Magistrate of a border district that has witnessed a sharp rise in drug abuse among adolescents and young adults. Recent reports indicate increasing consumption of synthetic drugs, leading to school dropouts, rising crime, health complications, and social instability. Several families have lost their primary earners due to addiction. An investigation reveals that drug trafficking networks operate through local agents who exploit unemployed youth. At the same time, rehabilitation centres in the district are inadequate, awareness levels are low, and social stigma prevents many addicts from seeking treatment. Local political leaders are divided—some demand a strict law-and-order approach, while others advocate a public health and rehabilitation strategy. A recent police crackdown led to the arrest of several young drug users. Civil society groups argue that treating addicts as criminals may worsen the problem, whereas law enforcement agencies insist that strong punitive action is necessary to deter drug consumption and trafficking.

As the District Magistrate, you are required to formulate a balanced and ethical response to address the growing drug menace.

Questions:

- What are the ethical issues involved in the above case?
- Identify the stakeholders and their competing interests.
- Should drug users primarily be treated as offenders or as victims requiring rehabilitation? Justify your answer with ethical reasoning.
- As District Magistrate, what short-term and long-term measures would you adopt to curb drug abuse while safeguarding public welfare and individual dignity?
- What ethical values and principles should guide public officials in tackling the drug menace?

ETHICS - EXAMPLES

- Social Responsibility:** After a solo trip to Kashmir, Sindhu, a young entrepreneur from Tamil Nadu, established South Indian restaurants in Srinagar, creating local employment while serving both tourists and residents. Despite financial losses, she continued paying employee salaries, reinvested her earnings into the business, and trained local youth in new culinary skills.
- Innovation:** Taiwan Excellence's "Go Healthy with Taiwan" Challenge supports health and wellness innovators with USD 30,000 grants, mentorship, and industry partnerships to develop scalable solutions. One such innovation, IdeasLab Inc. 's XView AI, uses artificial intelligence to detect biomechanical stress and prevent sports injuries.
- Collective Responsibility:** Residents of Pushpakandam in Idukki came together to rebuild their local post office after it was shifted 6 km away due to low business and poor infrastructure, viewing it as central to their identity and serving around 2,000 families. They raised ₹2 lakh (with ₹50,000 still pending) to construct a new facility, and have since increased usage to ensure its continued functioning.
- Social Responsibility:** Robin Kanattu Thomas founded Kochi-based Astrek Innovations after witnessing his grandfather lose his ability to walk due to inadequate rehabilitation despite a successful surgery. He developed an indigenous AI-powered robotic exoskeleton that makes advanced rehabilitation more affordable and accessible.
- Resourcefulness:** Inspired by Chennai's recurring floods and droughts, Coimbatore entrepreneur RR Sivaram transformed discarded plastic into Eco Bloc, an innovative stormwater drainage system that also harvests rainwater. By repurposing waste materials into durable urban infrastructure, the system conserves over 50 million litres of rainwater, reduces flooding, and improves groundwater recharge while lowering construction costs.
- Governance Ethics:** Kerala launched Operation Toofan in June as a multi-agency anti-drug drive targeting rising synthetic drug networks, registering over 7,100 cases and arresting 7,600+ peddlers by mid-July. It emphasises enforcement, intelligence-sharing (NCORD/NIDAAN), and stronger forensics to improve conviction rates.
- Accountability:** The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) issued nine notices to Swiggy Instamart following consumer complaints alleging the supply of expired, spoiled, contaminated, and unsafe food products, along with licensing and compliance irregularities. The regulator directed the company to submit explanations and implement preventive measures to prevent recurrence.

MODEL ESSAY

"Progress is more plausibly judged by the reduction of deprivation than by the further enrichment of the opulent."

Introduction

- Quote by Amartya Sen - shifts the lens from **wealth accumulation** to **deprivation reduction** as a truer measure of progress.
- Two neighborhoods in the same city—one where luxury malls expanded- another where children still waited for midday meals as their only proper nutrition. Despite rising GDP, hunger persisted just a few kilometers away.
- This contrast highlights a core dilemma of development: **Does progress mean more wealth, or less suffering?**

Progress as Freedom from Deprivation

- **Amartya Sen's Capability Approach:** Development = expansion of freedoms, not just income. **Eg:** Kerala model—high literacy (96%+) and life expectancy despite moderate income levels.
- **Poverty Reduction as Primary Goal:** Extreme poverty fell from ~36% (1990) to <10% globally.
- **Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) Perspective:** Includes health, education, living standards **Eg:** 415 million people exited multidimensional poverty (2005–2021) in India
- **Ethical Justification (Rawlsian Justice):** Justice requires improving the condition of the **least advantaged**.
- **Basic Needs First Principle:** Food, shelter, healthcare are prerequisites **Eg:** SDG Goal 1 (No Poverty) and Goal 2 (Zero Hunger) prioritized globally.

Wealth Creation Drives Progress

- **Trickle-Down Economics:** Wealth creation by elites leads to investment, jobs, and eventual benefits **Eg:** Silicon Valley innovation ecosystem.
- **Capital Fuels Growth:** Industrialization requires capital concentration **Eg:** Britain's Industrial Revolution.

- **Innovation:** Affluent societies invest more in R&D. **Eg:** US tech giants driving global innovation.
- **Tax Revenues and Welfare:** Higher incomes → higher taxes → welfare spending.
- **Global Competitiveness:** Wealth accumulation strengthens national power (e.g., China's rise).

Inclusive Growth: Bridging Wealth and Welfare

- **Growth with Redistribution:** Combine economic expansion with welfare policies. **Eg:** India's **DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer)** reducing leakages.
- **Inclusive Development Models:** "Rising tide lifts all boats" only if institutions ensure fairness. **Eg:** Scandinavian welfare states.
- **Targeted Social Policies:** Health (Ayushman Bharat), education (NEP), food security (NFSA).
- **Redefining Progress Metrics:** HDI, Gini coefficient, MPI alongside GDP. **Eg:** Bhutan's **Gross National Happiness (GNH)** as alternative model.

Conclusion

- True progress is not when malls multiply, but when **no child waits for a meal**.
- Wealth without equity deepens divides; deprivation reduction ensures dignity.
- Growth is necessary, but its **moral legitimacy depends on inclusion**.

Sample Quotes

- *Education makes a people easy to lead, but difficult to drive; easy to govern, but impossible to enslave. – Peter Brougham*
- *The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing. - Edmund Burke*
- *Until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter. – Chinua Achebe.*

MAINS JOT DOWN



GS I: INDIAN ART & CULTURE

- The Centre has granted a **Geographical Indication (GI)** tag to the nearly **200-year-old Jodhpuri Mojari**, a traditional handcrafted leather footwear from **Jodhpur, Rajasthan**. Renowned for its **fine leather craftsmanship, intricate embroidery, decorative designs, distinctive curved toe, and durability**, the craft is primarily produced by the **Jinagar (Jingar) community**.



GS I: INDIAN SOCIETY

- According to the **EAC-PM Chairman**, **weak labour demand**, rather than social norms, has become the main barrier to increasing women's workforce participation in India. In **May 2026**, the **female LFPR (15+ years)** stood at **32.8%**, with **36.7% in rural areas** and **24.8% in urban areas**, highlighting the need for greater employment opportunities for women.



GS II: EDUCATION

- The **AISHE 2023–24** report highlights a steady improvement in higher education participation, with the **Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)** increasing from **23.7 in 2014–15 to 30.0 in 2023–24**, while **female GER** rose from **22.9 to 31.2** during the same period. GER measures the proportion of students enrolled in higher education relative to the **18–23 years age group population**.



GS III: ENVIRONMENT & ECOLOGY

- A study by **IIT Gandhinagar** found that precipitation in the **eastern Indus basin (Ravi, Beas, and Sutlej)** declined by about **20% between 1951 and 2024**, leading to reduced inflows into major reservoirs such as **Pong, Bhakra, and Thein**. In contrast, the **western rivers (Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab)** experienced only a **6% decline in rainfall**, with river flows remaining relatively stable and groundwater conditions comparatively better.



GS III: DEFENCE

- Indonesia has become the **first country to sign an agreement to import India's Astra Mk-1 missile**, marking a significant milestone in India's defence exports.
- Developed by the **DRDO**, the **Astra Mk-1** is a **Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVRAAM)** designed for the Indian Air Force and Navy. It has a range of **80–110 km**, can operate at altitudes up to **20 km**, and travels at **Mach 4.5**. The missile is equipped with **inertial guidance, mid-course updates, and terminal active radar homing**, enabling accurate engagement of aerial targets beyond visual range.



GS II: GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND INTERVENTIONS

- **Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA)**, launched by the **Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (MoSJE)** in **2020**, aims to achieve a **Drug-Free India** through the active participation of youth, women, and local communities. Initially implemented in **272 districts** identified as highly vulnerable to substance abuse, the campaign was expanded to **all districts of India in 2023**. So far, it has reached over **29.24 crore individuals** through awareness and de-addiction initiatives.



GS III: INDIAN ECONOMY

- The **PM Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme** has surpassed **2 lakh credit-linked beneficiaries**, mobilising over **₹20,300 crore in investments**. Nearly **90% of beneficiaries are first-generation entrepreneurs**, **44% are women**, and over **75,000 enterprises** have been formalised through **Udyam, FSSAI, and GST registrations**, strengthening India's micro food processing sector.

- The **Vice President** launched the **National Programme for issuance of Letters of Authorisation (LoA)** to promote the **sustainable harnessing of fisheries resources in India's EEZ and the High Seas**. The initiative operationalises the **Union Budget 2025–26** proposal to create an enabling framework for sustainable and regulated deep-sea fishing activities.



GS III: INFRASTRUCTURE

- The Central Government has notified **Navi Mumbai International Airport** as a designated port for the import of drugs under the **Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940**, which regulates the import, manufacture, distribution, and sale of drugs and cosmetics in India.
- With this addition, the total number of authorized **ports of entry (air, sea, rail, and road) for drug imports** has increased to **42**.
- The Prime Minister flagged off **India's first green hydrogen-powered train** from **Jind, Haryana**, on **July 17, 2026**, marking a significant step towards **clean, green, and zero-emission transportation** and advancing India's sustainable mobility goals.

CHERRYPICKS OF THE WEEK

eSARAS

- **eSaras** is the official e-commerce platform of the **Ministry of Rural Development** under **DAY-NRLM**. It connects **women-led Self-Help Group (SHG) enterprises** with customers across India, enabling the sale of **handicrafts, handlooms, natural food products, home décor, and other rural products**.

DIRECT SEEDING OF RICE (DSR)

- **DSR** is a rice cultivation technique where seeds are **directly sown in the field** instead of being transplanted from a nursery. It saves **20–30% groundwater**, reduces labour needs, lowers **methane emissions**, and enables **earlier crop maturity**.

TRADE RECEIVABLES DISCOUNTING SYSTEM (TREDS)

- **TReDS** is an **RBI-regulated electronic platform** that enables MSMEs to obtain timely financing by discounting their trade receivables online. **MSMEs**

act as sellers, while **corporates, government departments, and PSUs** participate as buyers. Financing is provided by **banks, NBFC-Factors, and other RBI-authorised institutions**. Major platforms include **RXIL, M1xchange, Invoicemart, C2treds, and DTX**.

REUSABLE ROCKET

- A **reusable rocket** is a launch vehicle designed to **recover and reuse its components**, especially the first-stage booster, after a mission instead of discarding them. Reusability helps **reduce launch costs, increase launch frequency, and improve the sustainability of space missions**.

PAIZHEN FAULT

- It is an active tectonic fault in the **eastern Himalayan region**, formed by the collision of the **Indian and Eurasian plates**. It has remained active since the **Early Pleistocene** and continues to show significant tectonic activity during the **Holocene epoch**, contributing to seismic activity in the region.