



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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Table of Content

Bharatanatyam	1
Standoff in India-Canada Ties	3
Overcrowding in Prisons	5
‘State of Working India’ Report 2023	7
U.N.’s Climate Ambition Summit	9
Facts In News	10
Statue of Oneness (Ekatmata ki Murti)	10
Declaration on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response	11
International Week of the Deaf	12
Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)	13
P V Narasimha Rao Case	14
Masoor Production	15
17th International Congress on the Chemistry of Cement	15
Large companies get flexibility in raising debt funds	17
General Crop Estimation Survey (GCES)	18
New Pamban Bridge	19
Pramila Mallik	20

Bharatanatyam

Syllabus :GS 1/Art and Culture

In News

- Bharatanatyam dancer Saroja Vaidyanathan has died. The classical dancer was conferred the Padma Shri in 2002 and the Padma Bhushan in 2013.

Bharatanatyam



- Bharatanatyam of Tamil Nadu in southern India has grown out of the art of dancers dedicated to temples, and was earlier known as **Sadir or Dasi Attam**.
 - It is a popular [classical dance](#) form in South India.
- It is the first of India's traditional dances to be **refashioned** as a **theatre art** and to be exhibited widely **both at home and abroad**.
- Bharatanatyam rests on principles of performance and an aesthetics set down in classics such as Bharata's Natyashastra.
- It has a rich repertoire of songs in Telugu, Tamil and Sanskrit.
- Bharatanatyam has a highly evolved language of **Nritta**, abstract dance, and Nritya which unfolds the narrative.
- The **themes** have a wide range spanning human and divine love, and are generally classed under the rubric of shringara (romantic love) and Bhakti (devotion).
- The music of Bharatanatyam belongs to the **Carnatic system of southern India**.
- Some common instruments that accompany a Bharatanatyam dancer in a recital are; the Mridangam, Veena, Flute, Violin, Talam, Ghatam, Kanjeera, Tambura, Nadaswaram and Harmonium.

Elements of Bharatanatyam:

- **Bhava (Expressions):** Bharatanatyam performers need to master being able to perform various facial expressions as demanded by the song/story.
 - Expressions of joy, surprise, anger, grief, love etc aid in communication of the message during performance.
- **Hastha Mudra (Hand gestures):** Hand gestures and forming of different shapes by finger movements make an important part of Bharatanatyam performance.
- **Thala:** Bharatanatyam performance is done in sync with some soulful Carnatic music.
 - Thalas represent eight rhythmic intervals.
- **Dance:** Bharatanatyam dance performance includes carefully choreographed and well rehearsed dance performance that utilizes all of stage space, showcasing tricky body maneuvers and dance steps that sync perfectly with music, facial expressions and hand gestures.

- **Nataraja Statue:** Most Bharatanatyam dances are performed in front of Lord Nataraja statue.
 - All performances begin with a prayer and initial steps marking respect to Lord Nataraja.
- **Dress:** Bharatanatyam performers (females) wear silk saree, along with suitable ornaments, jewelry and metallic bells (gejje) on their wrist and ankles.
 - Male performers wear silk dhoti, shalya and minimum jewelry.
- **Performers:** Bharatanatyam is performed both by male and female artists. However, the majority of the artists are female.
- **Solo/Group:** Bharatanatyam may be performed both solo or in a small group

Do you know ?

- All classical dance forms are based on what is called the Fifth Veda, the Natya Shastra.
- Though the exact date of origin of this text cannot be traced, mythologically, it is believed that on Lord Brahma's command, Sage Bharata codified and documented the Natya Shastra.

Source:[TH](#)

Standoff in India-Canada Ties

Syllabus: GS2/International Relations

In News

- Amid the **diplomatic tensions between India and Canada**, India has suspended its visa services in Canada.

Background of the Issue

- **Hardeep Singh Nijjar** took on a key role in groups like Sikhs for **Justice and founded the Khalistan Tiger Force**. India designated the **KTF as a terrorist organization**.
- In 2018, **his name was on a list of wanted criminals** handed to the Canadian Prime Minister. In June, Nijjar was shot dead in Canada outside a Sikh cultural centre.
- Recently, the Canadian Prime Minister made the remarks in the parliament that **the country's intelligence agencies were investigating "credible allegations of a potential link between agents of the government of India and the killing of a Canadian citizen, Hardeep Singh Nijjar"** and that Canada had made its concerns clear to the Indian government.
- Following which Canada expelled an Indian diplomat and in retaliation India expelled a Canadian diplomat.
- India suspended visa services in Canada and E-visa services were stopped too, and Canadian citizens who apply from other countries will also not get a visa for India.

What is the Khalistan Movement?

- **Origin:** The Khalistan movement seeks the creation of an **independent Sikh state, separate from India**. Its origins trace back to the time of India and Pakistan's Independence in 1947 when negotiations leading to the partition of the Punjab region fueled the idea.
 - Over the years, this demand has resurfaced, with one of its most violent periods occurring during an **insurgency in the 1970s and 1980s** that gripped Punjab for more than a decade.
- **Operation Blue Star:** Then-Prime Minister Indira Gandhi ordered the military's entry into the Golden Temple, the holiest Sikh shrine, to remove armed separatist leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and his supporters.
 - This move incited outrage among Sikhs worldwide.
- **Events followed after Operation Blue Star:** A few months later, Prime Minister was assassinated by her Sikh bodyguards.
 - In 1986 and 1988, the Indian army undertook operations to root out militants from Punjab.
 - Militants were also held responsible for the 1985 bombing of an Air India Boeing 747 en route from Canada to India, resulting in the tragic loss of all lives on board.
- **Khalistan Movement in foreign land:** Although the Khalistan movement has dwindled in support within India, it continues to find pockets of backing among sections of the Sikh diaspora in Canada, which houses the largest Sikh population outside of Punjab, as well as in Britain, Australia, and the United States.
- **India's Stand:** The Indian diplomatic community in Canada has consistently emphasized **Canada's failure to address "extremism"** and the ongoing harassment of Indian diplomats and officials by Khalistani elements.
 - This has become a major source of **foreign policy tension between the two nations**.

Concerns

- **Trade Relations:** Canada has temporarily halted discussions on a proposed trade treaty with India.
 - Additionally, the Canadian Trade Minister has postponed a planned trade mission to India.
- **Diaspora:** Canada is home to over 1.2 million Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) who comprise more than **3% of its population**. The tensions between both the nations will create fear and anxiety among the people residing in the country.
- **Impact on Student community:** Since 2018, India has been the **largest source country for international students in Canada**.
 - In 2022, their number rose 47% accounting for about **40% of total overseas students**.

- Fear of rejection from the Canadian educational institutions is high among the student community.
- **Remittances:** In 2022, India received nearly \$859.83 million in personal remittances from Canada.
 - The worsening ties could affect the economic interests of thousands of Sikh families in Sikh-majority state of Punjab, since they have relatives in Canada, who remit millions of dollars back home.
- **Hospitality Sector:** Tour operators in India had been expecting a large number of tourists from Canada to visit this winter. For Kerala, **Canada is one of the top 10 countries to contribute to foreign tourist arrivals** in the State.
 - The strained diplomatic ties between India and Canada is a major cause for concern for the hospitality sector.

Way Ahead

- Relations are at a low point, but long-term strategic interests will likely force an improvement in time.
- India is **critical to the West's geopolitical goal of containing China**. Canada's top allies, including the United States and Britain, are unlikely to disrupt their own relationships with India.
- In the meantime Indo-Canadian relations might further deteriorate. But this is as it should be. Even realist foreign policies need be set aside when states face egregious violations of domestic and international law.

Source: [TH](#)

Overcrowding in Prisons

Syllabus: GS2/Polity & Governance

In News

- A parliamentary panel has recommended **ankle trackers or bracelets on prison inmates to reduce overcrowding in prisons**.

Recommendations by the Parliamentary Committee

- **Use of Technology:** Cost effective bracelet or anklet tracker that can be worn by the prisoners **who have procured bail and are out of prison on bail**.
- **Transfer of prisoners:** Prisoners from overcrowded jails may be transferred to other jails with vacant cells in the same State or other States.
- **For Transgender inmates:** Transgender inmates are often subjected to misrepresentation in prisons and not provided proper care, even if kept separately. There is a need for separate washroom facilities for transgender inmates.
- **For juveniles:** A clear definition of 'young offenders' should be given by MHA along with a common guideline to all State/UT. Governments describing the

procedure to govern them shall be provided for the convenience of the State/UT Governments.

- **For Vacancies:** All vacant posts in prisons should be filled up within three months to decrease the workload, including that of the post of welfare officers.
- **Disciplinary Measures:** Strict penalties and disciplinary measures be included in the conditions of service of jail staff to avoid their associations with inmates for the purpose of pulling favours or infiltrating contraband and mobile phones.

Overcrowding in Prisons

- **Occupancy rate** of any jail is defined as the **number of prisoners held against the sanctioned holding capacity of 100**. If the **occupancy rate is more than 100**, the jail is called overcrowded.
- Indian prisons have been **housing more inmates than their capacity** for decades now and this problem of overcrowded prisons is only getting worse.

Reasons for Overcrowding in Prisons

- The major causes of increase in prison population are excessive use of **pre-trial detention** and the use of prison for minor and petty offences.
 - India's prisons, the NCRB's Prison Statistics India 2021 report noted, are overcrowded, with occupancy rate at **130 percent**. The 245th report on prison reforms added that the number of **undertrials in prisons is far more than convicts**, even as jails remain understaffed.
- Further, the number of prisons or their capacity has not increased in proportion to the increase in population.
 - The total number of prisons at national level has increased by **1.0%**. During the year 2021 the admission of inmates has increased by **10.8%** over 2020.

Concerns

- **Fails to meet Basic Needs:** Overcrowding undermines the ability of prison systems to meet the basic needs of prisoners, **such as healthcare, food, and accommodation**.
- **Against Basic Rights:** This also endangers the basic rights of prisoners, including the right to have adequate standards of living and the right to the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health.
- **Security and Health Problems:** It not only creates security problems but also causes severe strain on the essential services, results in serious health hazards and disrupts penal reformation and rehabilitation programmes.
- **Administration Issue:** In an overcrowded prison segregation of hardened criminals and their separation from mild offenders become impossible.
- **International Standards:** Prison overcrowding compels prisoners to be kept under conditions unacceptable to the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for treatment of offenders to which India is a signatory.

Steps Taken by Government to Address the Issue

- **Establishment of Fast Track Courts (FTCs)** for expeditious disposal of long pending cases in the Sessions Courts.
- To **reduce the delay in the disposal of criminal trials the concept of plea-bargaining** was introduced in the Code of Criminal Procedure 1973 by way of **Criminal Law (Amendment) Act 2005**.
- **National Mission for Justice Delivery and Legal Reforms:** Under the Mission, the **Chief Justices of High Courts** have been requested to reduce the number of **undertrial prisoners by two-thirds** during the period January-July 2010.
- **Amendment in section 436 and insertion 436A in the Criminal Procedure Code:** Under Section 436, a person accused of a bailable offence can be detained in prison for a maximum period of 7 days and also a person who is unable to furnish bail within 7 days could be released on personal bond without surety.
 - Under section 436A, an undertrial has a right to seek bail on serving one half of the maximum possible sentence. No one can be detained in prison for a period exceeding the maximum possible sentence. It is not applicable for those who are charged with offences punishable with death sentence.
- **Under section 167 of Cr.P.C.** the **maximum period** for completing police investigations and filing charge sheets (for offences punishable with 10 years or more or death) is **90 days**, whereas for all other offences, the period is **60 days**.
 - The undertrial prisoner is entitled to seek release on bail, if investigation is not completed within the stipulated period.
- **Creation of additional capacity of prisons** through the Scheme of Modernisation of Prisons.

Source: [TH](#)

'State of Working India' Report 2023

Syllabus: GS3/ Economy

In News

- The '**State of Working India 2023**' report, released by Azim Premji University's Centre for Sustainable Employment.

About

- The report highlights the **impact of India's economic slowdown** from 2018-2020 and the subsequent Covid-19 pandemic on the labor market.
- It uses data sources like the National Statistical Office, including Employment-Unemployment Surveys and the Periodic Labour Force Surveys

Major findings of the 'State of Working India 2023' report

- **Faster structural change:** Between 2004 and 2017, around 3 million regular wage jobs were created annually. Between 2017 and 2019 this jumped to 5 million per year. Since 2019, the pace of regular wage jobs creation has decreased due to the growth slowdown and the pandemic.
- **Upward mobility has increased:** In 2004 over 80% of sons of casual wage workers were themselves in casual employment. This was the case for both SC/ST workers and other castes. For non-SC/ST castes, this fell from 83% to 53% by 2018 and incidence of better quality work such as regular salaried jobs increased. It fell for SC/ST castes as well, but to a lesser extent (86% to 76%).
- **Caste-based segregation has reduced:** Between 1983 and 2021, the proportion of regular wage workers belonging to the SC category has increased. In 2021, 32% of general caste workers were in regular wage employment as compared to 22% of SC workers. The report also looks at firm ownership data to conclude that general castes are over-represented to a greater degree in larger enterprises.
- **Gender-based earnings disparities have reduced:** In 2004, salaried women workers earned 70% of what men earned. By 2017 the gap had reduced and women earned 76% of what men did. Since then the gap has remained constant till 2021-22.
- **Women in job:** Between 1983 and 2021, the degree of women's representation in industries like tobacco, education, health and social work, and textiles has increased whereas in waste management & sewerage, it has decreased. Still, in all these sectors, women are over-represented in comparison to men.
- **Unemployment is falling but remains high:** Post-Covid the unemployment rate is lower than it was pre-Covid, for all education levels. But it remains above 15% for graduates and more worryingly it touches a huge 42% for graduates under 25 years.
- **Connection between growth and good jobs remains weak:** Since the 1990s year-on-year non-farm GDP growth and non-farm employment growth are uncorrelated with each other suggesting that policies promoting faster growth need not promote faster job creation. However, between 2004 and 2019, on average growth translated to decent employment.
- **Male Breadwinner Norm:** Due to the "male breadwinner" norm, as the husband's income increases the probability of the wife being employed also reduces. In rural areas, the fall in probability slows down as the husband's income increases.

Source: [IE](#)

U.N.'s Climate Ambition Summit

Syllabus:GS3/ Environment

News

- Recently the Climate Ambition Summit (CAS) as part of the United Nations General Assembly was concluded in New York.

About

- The CAS was to “showcase leaders who are **movers and doers** and have credible actions, policies and plans to keep the 1.5°C degree goal of the Paris Agreement alive and deliver climate justice to those on the front lines of the climate crisis.”
- The representatives from 34 states and 7 institutions spoke about ramp up action to address the climate crisis.They presented:
 - Updated pre-2030 Nationally Determined Contributions (as agreed in Glasgow);
 - Updated net-zero targets;
 - Energy transition plans with commitments to no new coal, oil and gas;
 - Fossil fuel phase-out plans; more ambitious renewable energy targets;
 - Green Climate Fund pledges; and economy-wide plans on adaptation and resilience.

International Climate Club

- **Germany** announced the launch of the International Climate Club, at CAS which it will co-chair with **Chile**.
- The club will work to help accelerate the industrial transition to cleaner forms of energy and to further develop emission-reduction measures.

Concerns

- The Climate Ambition Summit Was marked by the absence of major economies i.e. **China, United States and India** whose actions significantly influence the future of global emissions.
- The above three collectively account for about **42% of global greenhouse gas emissions** and are the top three emitters in that order – were all absent from the CAS.

Concluding remarks

- The Summit represents a critical political milestone for demonstrating that there is collective global will to accelerate the pace and scale of a just transition to a more equitable renewable-energy based, climate-resilient global economy.

Transition plans of India

- India last updated its climate pledges in 2022 of reducing emissions intensity – or the volume of emissions per unit of gross domestic product (GDP) – **by**

45% from 2005 levels by 2030, a 10% increase from what it agreed to in 2015.

- The government committed to meet **50% of its electric power needs from renewable, non-fossil fuel energy sources** – up from 40% committed at the Paris agreement.
- It is assured to create an additional carbon sink of **2.5 to 3 bn tonnes of CO₂-equivalent [GtCO₂e]** through additional forest and tree cover by 2030.
- Also in 2021, India committed to achieve net zero by 2070.

Source:[TH](#)

Facts In News

Statue of Oneness (Ekatmata ki Murti)

Syllabus: Prelims/Current Events of national importance

News:

- Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister recently unveiled the **Ekatmata ki Murti (Statue of Oneness)** on the **Mandhata hillock at Omkareshwar in Madhya Pradesh.**



Ekatmata ki Murti (Statue of Oneness):

- The 108-feet-tall statue portrays the **8th-century Indian philosopher and theologian- Adi Guru Shankaracharya, who consolidated the doctrine of Advaita Vedanta.**
- The unveiling is part of the ambitious **Ekatma Dham project** of the State government of Madhya Pradesh. The government wants to develop it along the lines of the **Mahakal Lok corridor** as a major destination for spiritual-religious tourism.

Adi Shankaracharya and Advaita Vedanta:

- **Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya (788–820 CE)** was born in Kaladi in Kerala and died in Kedarnath at the young age of 32.
- He is credited with **establishing the Advaita Vedanta School of Hindu philosophy**, which integrates diverse thoughts and Hindu practices into a philosophy based on the Vedic dictum of **‘One Truth, Many Expositions’**.
- He **emphasized the importance of pramanas or methods of reasoning, tempered by anubhava or intuitive experience**, which empower the seeker to gain the spiritual knowledge adumbrated by sacred texts.
- He declared that **any human being, merely by virtue of their personhood could attain the Supreme Consciousness** through a study of the scriptures, the Puranas and the epics, meditation (japa), fasting (upavasa) and worship (puja).
- He **revived Hinduism and also established the organizational structure for its survival and regeneration**, through the 4 ashrams/mathas he established in **Sringeri, Dwaraka, Puri and Joshimatha**.

Works:

- He composed 72 devotional and meditative hymns like **Soundarya Lahari, Sivananda Lahari, Nirvana Shalkam, Maneesha Panchakam**.
- He also wrote 18 commentaries on the major scriptural texts including the Brahma Sutras, the Bhagavad Gita and 12 major Upanishads.
- He also authored 23 books on the fundamentals of the Advaita Vedanta philosophy which expound the **principles of the non-dual Brahman**. These include **Viveka Chudamani, Atma Bodha, Vaakya Vritti, Upadesa Sahasri**, among others.
- His bhashyas are all written in prose, not verse, with lucidity and sharpness, and **employ the Upanishadic question-and-answer format that the West calls ‘Socratic’**.

Source: [TH](#)

Declaration on Pandemic Prevention, Preparedness, and Response

Syllabus: Prelims/Health; Disaster Management

News:

- The United Nations member states recently adopted a historical **political declaration to ensure that the world is better prepared for future pandemics**, at a High-Level Meeting during the ongoing UN General Assembly.

Key Objectives of declaration:

- **Prevent catastrophic health and socio-economic impacts that were experienced during COVID-19.**

- **Address the global shortfall of health workers** in accordance with the **Global Strategy on Human Resources for Health: Workforce 2030** by investing in education and employment.
- **Health workers should be protected** from all forms of violence, attacks, harassment, and discriminatory practices.
- **Utilise innovative technologies, including remote mental health services**, by promoting equitable access to telemedicine.
- **Support developing countries** in building expertise **by building on efforts under the COVID-19 Vaccine Global Access Facility**.
- Member nations should **take measures to counter the effect of health-related misinformation** especially on social media platforms.
- Governments should continue their work on amending the **International Health Regulations (2005)**, the only legally binding global rules in existence for health emergencies.
- Countries should conclude negotiations on **a formal agreement on pandemic prevention, preparedness and response**, known also as the **Pandemic Accord**, by **May 2024**.

Critical Analysis:

- Since it is a non-binding declaration, critics have also called the **text "rhetorical without commitments"**.
- While Paragraph 32 calls for equity, social justice and social protection, there is **no mentioned pathway on how to achieve these goals**.

Source: [DTE](#)

International Week of the Deaf

Syllabus:GS2/ Social Justice

News

- The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), is celebrating International Week of the Deaf (IWDeaf) from 18th-24th September, 2023.

About

- **History:** In **1958** International Day of Deaf was celebrated first as an initiative of the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD). Later the day extends to an International week of the Deaf.
- International Week of the Deaf is celebrated **annually** by the global Deaf Community in the last week of September.
- **International Day of Sign Languages:**It is celebrated on **23 September**.The choice commemorates the date that the WFD was established in 1951.

International Week of the Deaf:2023

- During this period the **Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC)** has been conducting various theme-based activities.

- ISLRTC is an autonomous organization under the DEPwD and the nodal institute for research, development, training and spreading awareness about **Indian Sign Language (ISL)** across the country.
- **The theme for 2023** for International Day of Sign Languages is **A World where Deaf People Everywhere can Sign Anywhere!**
- These flagship programs include Video Relay Services, Sign videos of financial and banking terms, ISL course at Special schools for Speech and Hearing Impaired etc.

World Federation of the Deaf (WFD)

- **WFD** is an international **non-profit and non-governmental** organization of deaf associations from **133 countries**.
- **Established:** 23 September, 1951 in Rome, Italy, at the first World Deaf Congress.
- **Headquarters:** Helsinki, Finland
- **It promote** the human rights of deaf people in accordance with the principles and objectives of the **United Nations Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, and other Human Rights Treaties.
- The WFD has a consultative status in the **United Nations** and is a founding member of the **International Disability Alliance (IDA)**.

Source: [PIB](#)

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)

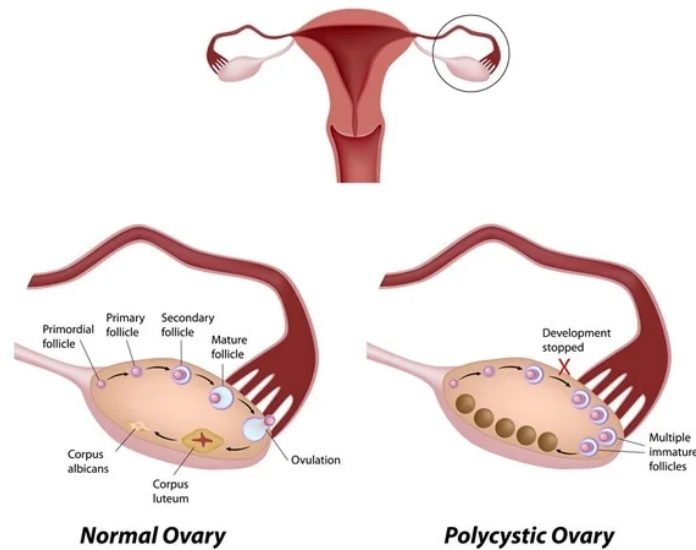
Syllabus: GS2/ Health

In News

- Various studies and reports reveal Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS) as an increasingly common health issue among modern Indian women.
 - One in five women in India grapples with PCOS, with 60% of those seeking infertility treatments doing so due to PCOS-related problems.

Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS)

- **About:** Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a common hormonal condition that affects women of reproductive age. It usually starts during adolescence.
 - It is a condition in which the **female's ovaries** are affected.
 - Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS) is a **multifactorial endocrine disorder** which is characterized by chronic anovulation.
- **Symptoms:** Irregular periods, hirsutism, weight gain are the common symptoms of PCOS.
 - The woman who is suffering from PCOD, will have a condition in which her ovaries will start to produce underdeveloped eggs. These eggs in future take the form of cysts inside the ovaries, but the increment of the male hormones (androgen) produces the follicular cysts in the ovary every month.
- **Causes:** Genetic predisposition, often marked by a family history of diabetes or obesity, exposed to environments that encourage neither a healthy diet nor regular exercise and are stress-laden.
- **Prevention:** Encouraging exercise, stress management, better lifestyle and diet.



Source: [TH](#)

P V Narasimha Rao Case

Syllabus: GS-2/Indian Polity

In News

- The Supreme Court of India has referred to PV Narasimha Rao Case of whether the legal immunity enjoyed by Members of Parliament under **Articles 105(2) and 194(2)** of the Constitution protects them from prosecution for taking a bribe in Sita Soren Case.

About Sita Soren Case

- Sita Soren, **the MLA of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)**, was accused of accepting a bribe to vote for a particular candidate in the Rajya Sabha Elections of 2012.
- The Jharkhand High Court in 2014 ruled that she is not immune from prosecution.
- She filed a Supreme Court petition, and the case was heard by a three-judge panel of the Supreme Court.
- Now, in 2023, the Supreme Court's Constitution Bench has referred the issue to a larger bench, which will ultimately re-examine whether MPs are exempt from prosecution if they accept bribes to vote.

Constitutional Provisions Involved

- **Article 105(2)** states, “No member of Parliament shall be liable to any proceedings in any court in respect of any thing said or any vote given by him in Parliament or any committee thereof, and no person shall be so liable in respect of the publication by or under the authority of either House of Parliament of any report, paper, votes or proceedings.”
- **Article 194(2)** extends this immunity to MLAs and states, “No member of the Legislature of a State shall be liable to any proceedings in any court in respect of anything said or any vote given by him in the Legislature or any committee

thereof, and no person shall be so liable in respect of the publication by or under the authority of a House of such a Legislature of any report, paper, votes, or proceedings.”

About PV Narasimha Rao Case

- In Lok Sabha elections (1991), the Congress party formed the government with P V Narasimha Rao as Prime Minister.
- In July 1993, a 'No Confidence Motion' was filed against P.V. Narasimha Rao's government.
- However, a person submitted a complaint with the CBI alleging that several members of parliament were bribed during the Lok Sabha no-confidence motion.
- Under the **Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 and Section 120-B** of the Indian Penal Code, criminal proceedings were brought against the members of Parliament who accepted and gave bribes.

Judgment of PV Narasimha Rao v. State (1998)

- In this case, the question arises whether under Article 105(2) does any Member of Parliament have any immunity to protect himself in criminal proceedings against him.
- By a 3:2 majority, the Supreme Court decided to extend protection from prosecution under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 to MPs who accepted bribes and cast votes in favor of the Congress administration at the time.
- Recently, the SC forwarded this contentious decision whether MPs who accept bribes should be granted immunity under Article 105(2) regardless of whether they vote to a larger (7-judge) panel.

Source: IE

Masoor Production

Syllabus: GS3/ Economy

In News

- The ongoing standoff in India-Canada ties effects can be felt in the availability and prices of **masur (red lentil)**, as per traders traders.

About

- **Global Production:** Canada is the largest source of red lentils for India with the annual import being pegged at around 4-5 lakh tonnes.
- **Domestic production:** Red lentil is the second most commonly grown rabi crop (winter crops), with Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh reporting around 70 per cent of the domestic production.
 - West Bengal, Bihar and some of the northeastern states of Tripura, Nagaland, Assam and Manipur are the key consumer states.
- **Domestic Annual Consumption:** The annual consumption of masur is estimated to be around 18-20 lakh tonnes.

Source: [IE](#)

17th International Congress on the Chemistry of Cement

Syllabus: Prelims/Current Events of national and international importance

News

- India has won the bid to host the **International Congress on the Chemistry of Cement (ICCC)** at **New Delhi in 2027**. The Bid was presented by India's National Council for Cement and Building Materials (NCCBM).

International Congress on the Chemistry of Cement (ICCC)

- **Mandate:** It **reviews the progress of research in the area of Cement and Concrete** by providing a strong and fruitful link between the academic world and the cement industry.
- **History:** The congresses are held generally at intervals of four to six years. The First congress was held in 1918 at London. **The 9th Congress was held at New Delhi in 1992**. The present 16th ICCC is being held at Bangkok, Thailand in September 2023.
- **Permanent Secretariat:** Duesseldorf, Germany.

Cement Industry of India

- **History:** The first cement company became operational in Porbandar, Gujarat in 1914.
- **Resources:** Cements used in construction are usually inorganic, often lime or calcium silicate based. Limestone is a natural resource and more than 65% of India's limestone comes from five states of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat and Chhattisgarh.
- **Present Production Status:** India's cement industry is second largest in the world (next only to China) with installed cement capacity of 600 million tonnes (8% of the global installed capacity).
- **Role of Private Sector:** Of the total capacity, **98% lies with the private sector** and the rest with the public sector.
- **Significance:** The cement industry in India plays a **key role in the circular economy framework** in the country by utilizing various industrial wastes and is **having one of the lowest CO₂ footprints and most energy efficient** in the world.
- **Government Initiatives:** Several government schemes such as **MGNREGA, PM Garib Kalyan Rozgar Abhiyan, 'PM Gati Shakti - National Master Plan (NMP)'** and state-level schemes such as Matir Srisht (West Bengal) and public work schemes (Jharkhand) have aided demand for cement.
- **The combined Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI)** measures combined and individual performance of production of eight core industries viz. Coal, Crude Oil, Natural Gas, Refinery Products, Fertilizers, Steel, Cement and Electricity. In this, **weight of Cement production is 5.37 per cent**.

National Council for Cement and Building Materials (NCCBM):

- **Background:** It was established in 1962 as the then Cement Research Institute of India (CRI).
- **Governances:** It is under the administrative control of DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India.
- **Mandate:** It is India's premier body for technology development, transfer, continuing education and industrial services for cement and construction industries.
- **HQ:** NCB has its corporate centre and main laboratories located at Ballabgarh (near New Delhi). Its regional centres are in Hyderabad (Telangana), Ahmedabad (Gujarat) & Bhubaneswar (Odisha).

Source: [PIB](#)

Large companies get flexibility in raising debt funds

Syllabus :GS 3/Economy

In News

- The Board of Securities & Exchange Board of India (SEBI) approved providing flexibility in the framework for **Large Corporates (LCs)** for meeting their **incremental financing needs** from the **debt market** through issuance of debt securities.

Key Highlights

- A **higher monetary threshold** has been specified for defining LCs, thereby reducing the number of entities qualifying as LCs.
- The current threshold for the criteria of outstanding long-term borrowings for the purpose of identifying any entity as **LC is Rs 100 crore or above**.
 - SEBI, in the consultation paper, had proposed the threshold to be increased to **Rs 500 crore or above**.
- The SEBI board **removed the penalty on LCs** that are not able to raise a certain percentage of incremental borrowing from the debt market.
- It also introduced **incentives and moderated disincentives** for issuing debt securities to meet the funding needs.
- It also decided to retain the requirement that compliance with the framework will be met over a **contiguous block of three years** with the view to facilitate ease of compliance and ease of doing business.
- It also streamlined the framework for **credit of unclaimed amounts of investors** in listed entities other than companies, REITS (Real Estate Investment Trusts) and InvITs (Infrastructure Investment Trust) to the Investor Protection and Education Fund (IPEF) and process of refund from the IPEF.
- Based on representations received from various stakeholders and in view of the emerging landscape of the domain of investment advice, it has been decided to allow time up to **September 30, 2025** to comply with these requirements,”

Objectives

- The regulator had mandated **LCs to meet 25 per cent** of their financing needs from the debt market, with an aim of deepening the corporate bond market in India.
- The move would also aid investors such as insurers, pension and provident funds which are required to invest a particular percentage of their incremental receipts in corporate bonds and could be hurt by lack of supply of issuances.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India

- It was constituted as a non-statutory body on April 12, 1988 through a resolution of the Government of India.
- It was established as a statutory body in the year 1992 and the provisions of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992.
- The basic functions is to protect the interests of investors in securities and to promote the development of, and to regulate the securities market and for

matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

Source: [IE](#)

General Crop Estimation Survey (GCES)

Syllabus: GS-3/Indian Economy, Agriculture

Context

- The mobile application and the web portal for **General Crop Estimation Survey (GCES) has been** launched.

About the Portal

- **Developed by:** Department of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
- **Objectives:** It has been designed to **enhance data accuracy and improve digital data governance** in agriculture.
 - To provide more **accurate and real time monitoring** of crop yields.
- **Key Features: Comprehensive Information:** It provides a comprehensive repository of yield estimation including village wise plan and plot details where the crop cutting experiments are conducted, post harvesting crop weight and drriage weight of the crop.
 - **Geo-referencing:** It is one of the key features which enables the primary worker to draw the boundary of the experimental plot and upload photos of the plot as well as of the crops. It will ensure transparency and accuracy of the data as well.

Significance

- **Timely Reporting:** Till date the data collection and compilation is done manually which led to delay in reporting by states. Through this portal, the field data will be collected using GPS enabled mobile applications and will be saved in the server ensuring on time reporting of data.
- **Transparency:** GPS enabled devices provide precise latitude and longitude coordinates for data collection points. This information ensures that data is linked to specific geographic locations.

Other Digital Agriculture Initiatives in India

- The Telangana Government has launched India's first **Agricultural Data Exchange (ADex) and Agricultural Data Management Framework (ADMF)**. It provides the right platform to ensure fair and efficient use of agricultural data by Industry and startups.
- The **Digital Agriculture Mission 2021–2025** was launched by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. It aims to encourage and speed up projects based on cutting-edge technologies, including AI, blockchain, remote sensing, robots, and drones.
- To provide farmers with real-time data and the necessary advice, **NITI Aayog has teamed up with International Business Machines (IBM) to create a crop production forecast model** supported by AI. It aids in enhancing crop output, soil quality, agricultural input control, and early disease outbreak warning.
- Development of **Kisan Suvidha mobile application** to facilitate dissemination of information to farmers on the critical parameters

- In August 2019, Cisco created an **Agricultural Digital Infrastructure (ADI)** solution to improve farming and knowledge exchange. This played an essential role in the data pool of the Department of Agriculture.
- The **Jio Agri (Jio Krishi)** platform digitized the agricultural ecosystem along the entire value chain to empower farmers. Its advanced features use data from various sources, input it into AI algorithms, and then deliver precise, individualised advice.

Source: [PIB](#)

New Pamban Bridge

Syllabus:GS3/Infrastructure

News

- The new Pamban railway sea bridge in Tamil Nadu which was scheduled to be completed by November may miss its deadline.

About

- The New Pamban Bridge is a railway sea bridge connecting the town of **Mandapam in mainland India with Rameswaram on Pamban Island.**
- The construction of the new bridge was **started in 2019.** It is being built by **Rail Vikas Nigam Limited.**
- The bridge with a **length of 2.05 km** is **India's first ever vertical lift sea bridge.**
- The bridge is being **built over geographically challenging terrain** as it is located in a corrosive marine environment, which is also cyclone-prone, and is a high-wind velocity zone.
- It is being **constructed parallel to the old Pamban bridge** and will replace it.

Old Pamban bridge

- It was built in **1914** to connect Mandapam in mainland India to the Rameswaram island situated in the Gulf of Mannar.
- It was the only link connecting the two locations until a new road bridge was built parallel to the sea link in **1988.**
- Historically, the railway line bifurcated after reaching the Pamban Island - one **10.06-km line** leading towards Rameswaram and another branch line of **24 km** terminating at **Dhanushkodi.** However, the Dhanushkodi line was destroyed by a cyclone in **1964.**

Vertical lift sea bridge

- A vertical-lift bridge is a type of **movable bridge** in which a span rises vertically while remaining parallel with the deck.

- It uses a system of counterweights and cables to move an interior lift span section that remains horizontal as it is raised up and down like an elevator, allowing river traffic to pass beneath the structure.

Source: [PIB](#)

Pramila Mallik

Syllabus: GS2/Polity

In News

- Pramila Mallik has been nominated as the **first woman Speaker of the Odisha Legislative Assembly.**

About

- She is a six-time MLA from Binjharpur Assembly Constituency, first elected in the year 1990.
- She has also held different portfolios as Cabinet Minister and is Odisha Revenue and Disaster Management Minister.
- The post of speaker has been lying vacant after former speaker Bikram Keshari Arukha was appointed Finance Minister during the last reshuffle of the cabinet by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

Source: [TH](#)