



# DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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## Puri Temple Ratna Bhandar

**Syllabus: GS1/Art and Culture**

### **Context**

- There is the demand to open the **Ratna Bhandar (treasure room)** of the Puri **Jagannath Temple** that has not been unlocked for three decades.
  - There are apprehensions that cracks have emerged in its walls that could endanger the precious ornaments stored there.

**What is Puri temple Ratna Bhandar?**

- The precious ornaments of sibling deities — **Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra** — given by devotees and erstwhile kings over centuries, are stored in the Ratna Bhandar of the 12th century shrine.
- It is located within the temple and has two chambers:
  1. **Bahara Bhandar (outer chamber):** It is opened regularly to fetch ornaments for the deities during the ‘**Suna Besha**’ (golden attire), a key ritual during the ‘**Annual Rath Yatra**’, and also during major festivals throughout the year.
  2. **Bhitar Bhandar (inner chamber):** It has not opened in the past 38 years.
- It had 12,831 bhari (one bhari equal to 11.66gm) of gold ornaments fitted with precious stones and 22,153 bhari of silver utensils, among others.

### **Jagannatha Puri Temple**

- Most of the main temple sites are located in **ancient Kalinga** — modern Puri District, including Bhubaneswar or ancient Tribhuvaneshvara, Puri and Konark.
- It was **built by Anantavarman of the Chodaganga dynasty** in the 10th century. However, the deities within the shrine are believed to be much older.
- Subsequently, in 1230, **king Anangabhim III** dedicated his kingdom to the deity and proclaimed himself as the ‘deputy’ of the god.
  - All those who conquered Orissa, such as the Mughals, the Marathas and the English East India Company, attempted to gain control over the temple. They felt that this would make their rule acceptable to the local people.



### **The Architectural Features**

- These are classified in **three orders, i.e., Rekha Deula, Pidha Deula and Khakhara Deula.**
- The temples of Odisha constitute **a distinct substyle within the Nagara Order.**
- **Deul (the shikhara):** It is vertical almost until the top when it suddenly curves sharply inwards.
- **Jagamohana (the mandapas):** The hall which is almost square
- The most repeated form is the **horseshoe shape**, which has come from the earliest times, starting with the large windows of the **chaitya-grihas.**

- Compartments and niches are generally square, the exterior of the temples are lavishly carved, their interiors generally quite bare. Odisha temples usually have boundary walls.

[Source: IE](#)

# Southwest monsoon withdraws from India

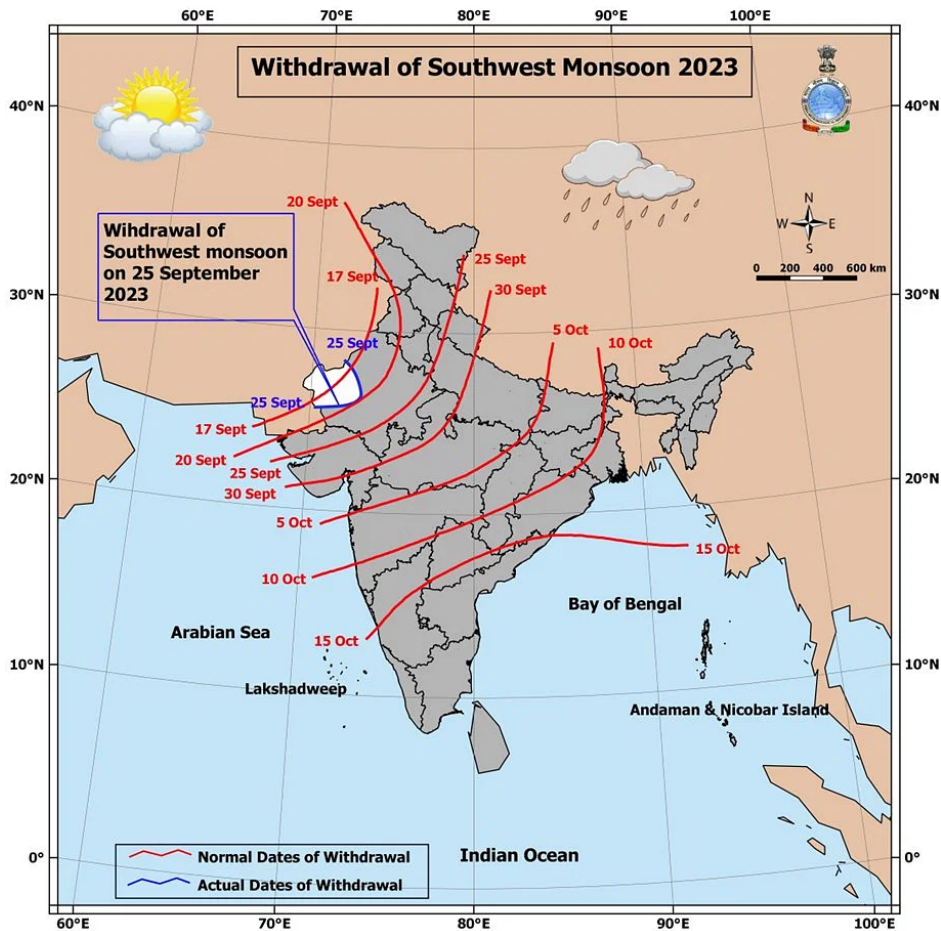
**Syllabus: GS1/ Important Geophysical phenomena**

## In News

- The southwest monsoon's withdrawal recently began from Rajasthan and the northeast monsoon is likely to set soon.

## More about the news

- **Withdrawal of monsoon:** Though monsoon withdrawal begins from Rajasthan, it takes nearly until early to mid-October for it to fully withdraw and be replaced by the northeast monsoon.
- **Retreating monsoon:** The onset of the northeast monsoon, also known as the 'retreating monsoon', would likely be "weak" according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).



- **Low pressure areas in Indian Ocean:** The IMD has also reported two developing low pressure areas — precursors to cyclones — both in the Arabian Sea as well as in the Bay of Bengal that are likely to become 'depressions'.
  - It is yet unclear if they will morph into something bigger (Cyclone formation).

## Monsoon, its Onset & withdrawal/retreat

- **About the Monsoon:** The monsoons are experienced in the **tropical area** roughly **between 20° N and 20° S**. Following are a few reasons for the formation of monsoons in the Indian Subcontinent:
  - **The differential heating and cooling of land and water** creates low pressure on the landmass of India while the seas around experience comparatively high pressure.
  - **The shift of the position of the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ)** in summer, over the Ganga plain (this is the equatorial trough normally positioned about 5°N of the equator. It is also known as the monsoon trough during the monsoon season).
  - The presence of the **high-pressure area, east of Madagascar**, approximately at 20°S over the Indian Ocean. The intensity and position of this high-pressure area affects the Indian Monsoon.
  - The **Tibetan plateau gets intensely heated** during summer, which results in strong vertical air currents and the formation of low pressure over the plateau at about 9 km above sea level.
  - The movement of the **westerly jet stream** to the **north of the Himalayas** and the presence of the **tropical easterly jet stream** over the **Indian peninsula** during summer.
- **The onset of monsoon:** The monsoon enters mainland India between the **last week of May and the first week of June**.
  - **June 1** is its official onset date over Kerala.
  - The IMD only counts the rainfall **between June 1 and September 30** as monsoon rainfall.
- **The retreat of the monsoon:** The ‘withdrawal’ or ‘retreat’ doesn’t mean that the monsoon system ceases to pour rain over India from October 1.
  - In fact, monsoon-related rain can continue well into the **first fortnight of October** and only **really retreats from India by late October**.
  - It is then replaced by the **retreating, or northeast monsoon** in November which is the key source of rainfall for several parts of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and north interior Karnataka.
  - More technically, withdrawal is a **cessation of rainfall activity over northwest India for five straight days, an anticyclone establishing itself in the lower troposphere** and a marked **reduction in moisture content**.

Source: TH

## Corruption among public servants in India

**Syllabus :GS 2/Polity and Governance**

### In News

- According to the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) data, there are six cases involving **Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officers** among over **118 cases of corruption** involving public servants that await **prosecution sanction from the Central and State governments**.

## What is Corruption ?

- Corruption is dishonest behaviour by those in positions of power, such as business managers or government officials.
- Corruption can come in the form of bribery, double-dealing, and defrauding investors.
- According to Transparency International (TI), India ranks very high (85 out of 180 countries) in the Asian region.

## Major causes of corruption in India

- Poor regulatory framework
- Exclusivist process of decision making aggravated by discretion and official secrecy
- Rigid bureaucratic structures and processes and absence of effective internal control mechanisms.
- Social acceptability and tolerance for corruption
- Absence of a formal system of inculcating the values of ethics and integrity further propagates corruption.

## Impacts

- Corruption is a complex social, political and economic phenomenon that affects all countries.
- It adversely affects the country's economic development and achievement of developmental goals.
- It promotes **inefficiencies in utilisation of resources**, distorts the markets, compromises quality, destroys the environment and of late has become a serious threat to national security.
- It adds to the deprivation of the poor and weaker sections of the economy.
- It attacks the foundation of democratic institutions by distorting electoral processes, perverting the rule of law and creating bureaucratic quagmires whose only reason for existing is the soliciting of bribes.

## Law and Legislations

- Public servants in India can be penalised for corruption under the **Indian Penal Code, 1860**.
- The **Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act, 1988** prohibits benami transactions.
- The **Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002** penalises public servants for the offence of money laundering.
- In May 2011, the Indian Government ratified two UN Conventions - the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UNTOC) and its three protocols.

## Other related steps

- **Discontinuation of interviews** in recruitment of **Group ‘B’** (Non-Gazetted) and **Group ‘C’ posts** in Government of India.
- The **All India Services (Disciplinary and Appeal) Rules and Central Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules** have been amended to provide for specific timelines in the procedure related to disciplinary proceedings.
- The Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 has been amended in 2018.
  - It clearly **criminalises the act of giving bribes** and will help check big ticket corruption by creating a vicarious liability in respect of senior management of commercial organisations.
- Central Vigilance Commission (CVC), through various orders and circulars recommended adoption of **Integrity Pact** to all the organizations in major procurement activities and to ensure effective and expeditious investigation wherever any irregularity / misconduct is noticed.
- The **institution of Lokpal** was first contemplated in India in the early 1960s to root out corruption in public offices.
- The **Central Vigilance Commission** mandate is to oversee the vigilance administration and to advice and assist the executive in matters relating to corruption
- The government established the **Comptroller and Auditor General of India in 1971** to audit the public finances of key institutions and to prevent incidences of corrupt practices.
- The RTI Act has emerged as a key instrument against corruption.
- In a **judgement in December 2022 — Neeraj Dutta v. State (Govt. of NCT of Delhi)** — the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court came down heavily on corruption among public servants in the country and lowered the bar for the quantum of evidence required to convict persons charged with corruption.

### **Conclusion and Way Ahead**

- India aims to emerge as a responsible global actor, it is imperative for the political leadership to bring comprehensive political reforms including transparency in political funding, reform of justice delivery system, and maintaining the integrity of the RTI process to attack corruption from its roots.
- Freedom from corruption, fight against corruption in every area and in every sector is the need of the hour.
- **Fighting corruption requires** bold structural reforms and a comprehensive refinement of existing laws.
- In addition, there is a need to urgently repair India’s broken criminal justice system, which, in many ways, acts as the real mothership of corruption.
- Cases taking years and decades to be resolved, including big-ticket scandals, encourage impunity and reinforce corrupt behaviour.

Source:[TH](#)

# Implementation Status of POSH Act

**Syllabus :GS 1/Women Empowerment /GS 2/Polity and Governance**

## In News

- The Supreme Court has flagged “serious lapses” in the implementation of the **PoSH Act** to protect women from sexual harassment in workplaces

## About the POSH Act

- It was enacted to ensure safe working spaces for women and to build enabling work environments that respect women’s right to equality of status and opportunity.
- It defined **sexual harassment**, lay down the procedures for complaint and inquiry, and the action to be taken in cases of sexual harassment.
- It is applicable to all women irrespective of their age or employment status, working in **organised or unorganised sector**.

## Major Provisions

- The Act **defines sexual harassment** to include unwelcome acts such as physical contact and sexual advances, a demand or request for sexual favours, making sexually coloured remarks, showing pornography, and any other unwelcome physical, verbal, or non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature.
- It applies to all **public and private sector organisations** throughout India.
- It mandated that every employer must constitute an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) at each **office or branch that had 10 or more employees** which can be approached by any woman employee to file a formal sexual harassment complaint.
  - It has to be headed by a **woman**, have at least two women employees, another employee, and, to pre-empt any undue pressure from senior levels, to include a third party such as an NGO worker with five years of experience, familiar with the challenges of sexual harassment.
  - Besides
- The Act mandates every district in the country to create a local committee (LC) to receive complaints from women working in firms with **less than 10 employees** and from the informal sector, including domestic workers, home-based workers, voluntary government social workers and so on.
- A woman can file a **written complaint either to the internal or local complaints** committee within three to six months of the sexual harassment incident.
- It also makes the employer duty-bound to organise regular workshops and awareness programmes to educate employees about the Act, and conduct orientation and programmes for ICC members.



- If the employer fails to constitute an ICC or does not abide by any other provision, they must **pay a fine of up to ₹50,000**, which increases for a repeat offence.
- It mandates States to appoint an officer in every district who would play a “pivotal” role in the implementation of the Act.

### **Origin**

- The POSH Act was formulated keeping the essence of **Vishaka Guidelines** issued by the Supreme Court in 1997 which had to be strictly observed in all the workplaces.
  - Vishaka Guidelines, which were laid down by the Supreme Court in a judgement passed in 1997.
  - The case in question was filed by women’s rights groups, including one called Vishaka, over the alleged gangrape of a social worker from Rajasthan named Bhanwari Devi. Bhanwari had fought against the marriage of a one-year-old baby girl in 1992, and had been allegedly gangraped as retribution.

### **Issues and Concerns**

- The Supreme Court in its judgement called out the lacunae in the constitution of ICCs, citing a newspaper report that 16 out of the 30 national sports federations in the country had not constituted an ICC to date.
- The judgement also flagged the **improper constitution** in cases where the ICCs were established – pointing out that **they either had an inadequate number of members or lacked a mandatory external member**.
- The Act **does not satisfactorily address accountability**, not specifying who is in charge of ensuring that workplaces comply with the Act, and who can be held responsible if its provisions are not followed.
- Law is **largely inaccessible to women workers** in the informal sector as more than **80% of India’s women workers** are employed in the informal sector.
- In workplaces sexual harassment cases are hugely **underreported in India for a number of reasons**.
- lack of awareness in women employees

### **Supreme Court’s Observations**

- The court directed the Union, States and UTs to undertake a time-bound exercise to verify whether Ministries, Departments, government organisations, authorities, public sector undertakings, institutions, bodies, etc. had constituted Internal Complaints Committees (ICCs), Local Committees (LCs) and Internal Committees (ICs) under the Act.
- Recently, The court ordered the Principal Secretaries of the Ministry of Women and Child in States to “personally ensure appointment of a district officer in each

district within their territorial jurisdiction, as contemplated under Section 5 within four weeks from the date of this judgement”.

### **Suggestions and Way Ahead**

- Employers should display the provisions of the Act conspicuously;
- Appoint an Internal Committee;
- Conduct awareness programmes;
- Treat sexual harassment as misconduct under their service rules and assist women who file a complaint.
- They should be alive to the reality that in an office where men and women work, sexual harassment is a possibility and put in place formal and informal mechanisms to deal with it.
- Central and State governments should adopt suitable measures to ensure that private sector employers implement the guidelines.
- Moral instruction classes in schools should be revived and sensitisation on human rights and gender equality should be created among children in these classes.

Source:[TH](#)

## **Reforms for Multilateral Development Banks**

### **Syllabus: GS2/ International Relations**

#### **News**

- A G20 expert panel on strengthening Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) wants the institutions to shift from financing individual projects to prioritizing programmes with sectoral focus and long-term transformation plans.

#### **What are Multilateral Development Banks?**

- **Multilateral Development Banks** are institutions whose members include multiple developed and developing countries, which have to fulfill certain lending obligations to facilitate developmental objectives.
- **They provide financing and technical assistance** to countries and organizations undertaking projects across sectors including transport, energy, urban infrastructure, and waste management.
- **Lending operations:** Usually, developed countries in MDBs contribute to the lending pool while developing countries primarily borrow from these institutions to fund development projects.

#### **Need for reforms within MDBs**

- **To deal with the climate crisis:** A reformed MDB ecosystem can equip stakeholders to better deal with global challenges in effective ways.
- **Private sector engagement:** The existing perception and practices of MDBs have adversely impacted their engagement with the private sector. MDBs are

often seen as bureaucratic and risk averse, which deters the private sector from being more involved in assisting with financing.

- **Sustainable development goals (SDG):** According to the expert group, MDBs should focus their operations – financial as well as analytical – on helping national governments create and operationalise their respective country platforms for the highest priority sustainable development goals (SDG).

### **Role of MDBs in India's development**

- **The World Bank**, has committed to lending worth \$97.6 billion in India, including all active and closed projects.
- **The Asian Development Bank**, has cumulatively committed to assistance worth \$59.7 billion in India for project and technical assistance.
- **The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)**, has approved financing worth \$9.9 billion in India.
- **The European Investment Bank**, has signed off on 22 projects in India with a cumulative value of Euro 4.5 billion.

### **World Bank**

- The World Bank Group is an international partnership comprising **189 countries** and five constituent institutions that works towards eradicating poverty and creating prosperity. It traces its origin to the **Bretton Woods Conference, 1944**.
- The World Bank is the collective name for the **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)** and **International Development Association (IDA)**, two of five international organizations owned by the World Bank Group.
- **Headquarters:** Washington, D.C

### **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)**

- AIIB is a multilateral development bank that provides financing for infrastructure projects in Asia.
- The bank was established in **2016** and has **109 members**.
- **Headquarters:** Beijing, China

### **The European Investment Bank**

- EIB is the European Union's development bank and is owned by the EU Member States. It is one of the largest supranational lenders in the world.
- The bank was established in **1958**
- **Headquarters:** Luxembourg

### **Asian Development Bank**

- ADB is a regional development bank established in **1966** for Social and Economic Development. It has **68 members**.
- **Headquarters:** Manila, Philippines.

Source:[IE](#)

## Hydropower in India

**Syllabus: GS3/Renewable Energy**

### **Context**

- The Union Minister for Power and Renewable Energy informed that the [Glacier Lake Outburst \(GLOF\)](#) that destroyed the Chungthang dam in Sikkim will not slow down India's reliance on hydropower.

### **About:**

- The Chungthang dam, a key component of the 1,200 MW Sikkim Urja hydel power project, was destroyed along with several highways, villages, and towns in Sikkim.
- The early reports say that the dam wasn't engineered to withstand flow from GLOF events.
- Scientists who have been studying the glacier lakes in the Himalayas have warned of such events and the need for early warning systems for over a decade.

### **Hydropower:**

- It is clean, green, renewable, non-polluting and environmentally friendly. It has a renewed emphasis due to the changing energy mix of India.
- The Indian power sector has undergone a significant transformation in the past decade.
  - In 2012, the energy deficit was nearly 4.2%. **Over 175 GW generation capacity** has been added since 2014 transforming the country to power surplus.
- It is critical in India's response to the challenge of meeting the energy needs and combating the issues of climate change.

#### **Categorisation:**

- **Micro:** up to 100 KW
- **Mini:** 101 KW to 2 MW
- **Small:** 2 MW to 25 MW
- **Mega:** Hydro projects with installed capacity  $\geq$  500 MW

### **Trend: Hydro Power Generation**

- In 1947, hydropower capacity was about 37% of the total power generating capacity and over 53% of power generation.

- In the late 1960s, coal-based power generation started displacing hydropower in India and hydropower's share in both capacity and generation fell dramatically.
- In August 2023, hydropower capacity of about 46,865 MW (megawatt) accounted for roughly 11% of power generation capacity.
- In 2022-23, hydropower accounted for 12.5 % of power generation in India.
  - India had about 4745.6 MW pumped storage capacity in operation in 2023 with about 57,345 MW of pumped storage capacity under various stages of investigation and construction.

- **Hydropower infrastructure** helps in *averting the floods, mitigating the impacts of global warming, and ensuring redistribution of water to arid regions and improving water security along with electricity generation.*

#### **Do You Know?**

- Projects like Hirakund & Bhakra Dam have increased Agriculture Productivity and have been behind the success of Green Revolution in India while the role of Tehri Dam in mitigating the 2013 Uttarakhand disaster.

#### **India's Potential:**

- The hydropower potential of India is **around 1,45,000 MW** and at 60% load factor, it can meet the demand of around 85, 000 MW.
  - Around **26% of Hydropower potential has been exploited in India.**
- India has about 100 large hydropower plants, defined as those with over 25 MW capacity, but their share in the country's overall electricity mix has been falling and now accounts for around 12%.
- The Government of India has set an ambitious target for enhancement of **non-fossil fuel Energy capacity to 500 GW by 2030** (as announced in the **COP26 Summit in Glasgow**).
- Hydro projects also have a long useful life. Some projects like Bhakra are in operation for last 50 years, while some others like Pykara (59.2 MW) & Mettur Dam (50 MW) in Tamil Nadu, Pallivasal (37.5 MW) in Kerala and Sivasamudram (42 MW) in Karnataka etc., are in existence for more than 70-80 years now.

#### **Policy on Hydro Power Development in India:**

- It was formulated in 1998, which is based on the recommendations of the Committee on Hydro Power.
- The **objective** of the Policy is to prevent a decline in hydro share and to undertake measures for the exploitation of vast hydro-electric potential in the country especially in the North and North Eastern Regions.

#### **Challenges:**

- Hydropower can also cause **environmental and social problems**.
- Reservoirs drastically change the landscape and rivers they are built on. Dams and reservoirs can reduce river flows, raise water temperature, degrade water quality and cause **sedimentation**.
- **Major challenges** are *examining scientific evidence, analysing energy policy imperatives, geopolitical considerations, and future directions for a sustainable hydropower policy in India in the context of ongoing climate change*.

#### **Conclusion and Suggestion:**

- The government must consider changes occurring due to global warming while planning new hydropower projects.
  - There will be a simultaneous rise in extreme inflow and high reservoir storage conditions for most dams.
- The Union Ministry of Power signed a memorandum of understanding with the Defence Research and Development Organization (DRDO) for the **implementation of an ‘Early Warning System’ for vulnerable hydro projects or power stations**.
  - It works for the suitable mitigation measures **against avalanches, landslides, glaciers, glacial lakes and other geo-hazards**.

[Source: TH](#)

## Facts In News

### Pramod Mahajan Grameen Kaushalya Vikas Kendras

#### **Syllabus:GS3/ Skill Development**

#### **News**

- The Prime Minister launched 511 Pramod Mahajan Grameen Kaushalya Vikas Kendras in Maharashtra.

#### **About**

- **Pramod Mahajan Grameen Kaushalya Vikas Kendras** has been established across 34 rural districts of Maharashtra.
- **Objective:** The Kendras will conduct skill development training programs across various sectors to provide employment opportunities to rural youth. Each Kendra will train about 100 youngsters in at least two vocational courses.
- **The training will be provided** by empanelled industry partners and agencies under the **National Skill Development Council**.
- **Significance:** The establishment of these Kendras will help the region attain significant strides towards developing a more competent and skilled manpower.

**Source:**[PIB](#)

## Gyan Sahayak Scheme

### **Syllabus: GS2/ Education**

#### **News**

- The Gyan Sahayak Scheme announced by the Gujarat government witnessed opposition from student groups, political parties (including the AAP and Congress) etc.

#### **Gyan Sahayak Scheme**

- **The scheme aims** to fill vacancies in government schools with the appointment of teachers also known as Gyan Sahayaks on **contractual basis** till the process of regular appointments is complete. The scheme ensures that education is not affected.
- **The Gyan Sahayaks** would be appointed in the interim period till the vacant posts of teachers in primary, secondary and higher secondary government schools are filled through regular appointments.
- **Only for government schools:** Gyan Sahayak Scheme is for government and grant-in-aid schools, especially for Mission Schools of Excellence.

#### **Eligibility Criteria**

- To be a Gyan Sahayak in **primary school**, the candidate should have cleared the **Teachers Eligibility Test (TET)-2** conducted by **Gujarat Examination Board**. Candidates who have cleared TET-2 five years before the announcement of Gyan Sahayak Scheme cannot apply.
- For **secondary and higher secondary** Gyan Sahayak, a candidate should clear the Teacher Aptitude Test (TAT).
- **Age limit:** Both primary and secondary school teachers should be under 40 years, the age limit is 42 for higher secondary school

**Source:**[IE](#)

## Nuclear Briefcase

### **Syllabus: GS-3/Defence**

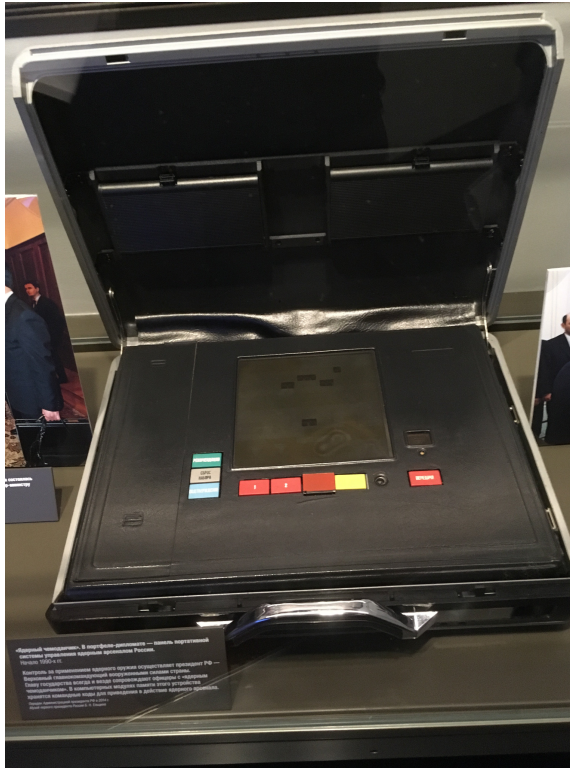
#### **In News**

- During the recent visit of the Russian President to China, he was seen with officers carrying a “**nuclear briefcase**”.

#### **What is a ‘Nuclear Briefcase’?**

- Also known as the ‘**Cheget**’, named after **Mount Cheget in the Caucasus Mountains in Russia**. It plays a vital role in **ordering a nuclear strike by Russia**.
- The briefcase serves as a **secure communication tool** connecting the president with his top military leaders and conveying orders for a nuclear strike.
- In the “**command**” section, there are **two buttons**:

- **White for launch** and **Red for Cancel**, activated with a special flashcard (Zvezda).
- The Briefcase links the president to the military through “**Kazbek**”, a secret network connecting to “**Kavkaz.**”
- The **President, Defence Minister, and Chief of General staff** have a briefcase each and they are supposed to coordinate in case of a potential order to strike.



### **Other Countries with Similar Systems**

- The **US President** has a similar briefcase known as the **Presidential Emergency Satchel**. It was nicknamed the ‘**football**’.
- According to the **Atomic Heritage Foundation**, the football includes information on retaliatory options, a book listing classified site locations, and a three-by-five-inch card with authentication codes – called the ‘**biscuit**’.

Source: [IE](#)

## **Who are Palestinians?**

### **Syllabus: GS-2/International Relations**

#### **Context:**

- The [Israel-Palestine Conflict](#) is one of the world’s longest-running conflicts.

#### **Who are Palestinians?**



- The Palestinian people are Arabs who live and have lived in a certain geographical region in the Middle East.
- **Location:** Palestine is used to refer to the geographic region between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River and various adjoining lands.
- **Historical Palestine:**
  - It is made up of the current Palestinian territories of the **Gaza Strip and the West Bank**. It is referred to as the **State of Palestine** and the **modern parts of Israel**.
  - Both of these territories were captured by Israel during the **Six-Day War in 1967**.
  - In ancient times, Palestine was part of the **region of Canaan**, which was made up of the **Kingdoms of Judah and Israel**.
    - This has resulted in constant political conflict, land seizures, and even war. Still to this day, Israel and Palestine continue their dispute over the land.
- **Name Derivation:**
  - The term “Palestine” is derived from the **Greek word Philistia**, which refers to the **ancient state of the Philistines**.
    - In **Arabic** it was referred to as “**Filasteen**” and in **Hindi** is “**Filisteen**”.
    - Another term that is used to describe this **region of the Middle East** is “**Levant**,” which is an area generally defined as encompassing modern-day Palestine, Israel, Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan.
  - **Current Status:**
    - Millions of Palestinians live in the **Gaza Strip, West Bank, and Israel** under the control of the state of Israel.
    - The majority of Palestinians today are **Sunni Muslims**.
      - According to the **Central Intelligence Agency**, 80-85 percent of the population in the West Bank and 99 percent of the population in the Gaza Strip are Muslims.
    - The conflict over these lands has left these Palestinians facing humanitarian crises, like lack of water, food, electricity, and little access to proper medical care.

Source: [IE](#)

## International Humanitarian Law

**Syllabus: GS2/International Relations**  
**In News**

- The bombing of Hospital in Gaza has pushed countries around the world to label Israel's recent aggressions as a **“war crime”**, and a **“violation of international humanitarian law”**.

### **What is a War Crime?**

- According to the United Nations, no single document in international law codifies all war crimes. Lists of what may count as a war crime can be found in various branches of international law: **humanitarian, criminal and customary law**.
- According to the UN, a war crime occurs **during armed conflict** and is a **breach of the Geneva Conventions and a violation of international humanitarian law** also known as the “law of war”.

### **Geneva Convention**

- International humanitarian law, particularly in times of war, is dictated primarily by the **Geneva Conventions** which Israel has ratified.
- Its four central conventions were formed by a series of treaties that took place between **1864 and 1949**, with the **first one being a shield for the sick and wounded in the armed forces**.
- The Fourth Geneva Convention, established in **1949**, was the **first to call for the overall protection of people who do not take part in any hostilities** – be it children, patients or healthy adult men.
- The 1949 Geneva Conventions have been ratified by **all Member States of the United Nations**, while the Additional Protocols and other international humanitarian law treaties have not yet reached the same level of acceptance.
- **India ratified the Geneva Convention in 1950**, becoming the **5th country in the World** and the first country in the region to adopt and implement legislation for the 1949 Conventions. India also ratified Protocol III but is **not a signatory to the Additional Protocols I and II**.

### **Hague Conventions**

- The Hague Conventions address the **conduct of warfare** and allow for reciprocity toward an enemy party.
- The Hague Conventions adopted in **1899 and 1907** focus on the **prohibition to warring parties to use certain means and methods of warfare**.
- They are **binding on even non-ratifying states** as a part of international customary law.

### **Rome Statute**

- The Rome Statute is a **treaty that established the International Criminal Court (ICC)**, the body responsible for **investigating and prosecuting Geneva Convention violations** such as attacks on hospitals and historical monuments.

Source: [TH](#)

## Ghar-Ghar KCC Abhiyaan

**Syllabus: GS3/Indian Economy**

### News

- In a significant step towards enhancing **financial inclusion** and support for the fisheries sector, the Secretary (Fisheries) chaired a pivotal meeting focusing on the '**Ghar-Ghar KCC Abhiyaan.**'

### About

- It is an ambitious campaign to **extend the benefits of the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme** to every farmer across India.
- This campaign aims to achieve **universal financial inclusion**, ensuring that every farmer has unhindered access to credit facilities that drive their agricultural pursuits.
- For KCC Ghar Ghar Abhiyaan, **NABARD has been identified as the Primary Executing Organization**, vested with the responsibility of overall execution and monitoring of the programme.

### Kisan Credit Card (KCC) Scheme

- It was introduced in **1998** for the issue of Kisan Credit Cards to farmers on the basis of their holdings for uniform adoption by the banks so that farmers may use them to readily purchase agriculture inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc. and draw cash for their production needs.
- It is to be **implemented by Commercial Banks, RRBs, Small Finance Banks and Cooperatives under the overall guidance of the Department of Financial Services.**

**Source: PIB**

## Regional Disparity in Overcoming Cancer

**Syllabus: GS2/Health**

### In News

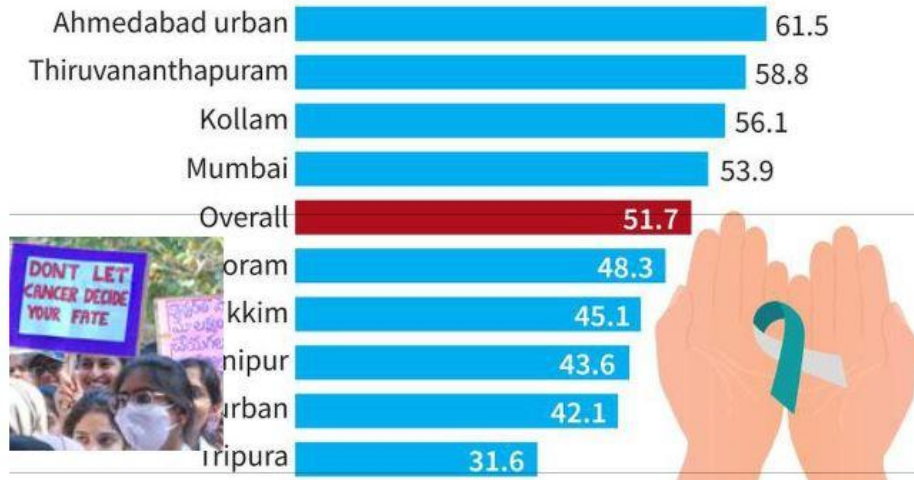
- There is a **major regional disparity in overcoming cervical cancer** according to a study published in The Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia.

### Major Findings

- Roughly **52% of cervical cancer cases diagnosed between 2012 and 2015 survive.**
- Among those that participated in the study, Ahmedabad's urban PBCR demonstrated the **highest survival rate at 61.5%**, followed by Thiruvananthapuram with 58.8% and Kollam at 56.1% and in contrast, **Tripura reported the lowest survival rate at 1.6%.**
- Survival rates were **notably lower in India's northeastern region**, particularly in PBCRs in Tripura, Pasighat and Kamrup urban areas.

# Survival rates

The chart shows the survival rate (%) for cervical cancer across the 11 Population Based Cancer Registries (PBCRs)



## Population Based Cancer Registries

- Cancer Registration is an ongoing systematic collection of data on identified parameters **for determining the magnitude and burden of cancer**, occurrence of new cases, assessing long term changes in trend and determining the clinical parameters of various cancers.
- Three Population Based Cancer Registries (PBCR) at Bengaluru, Chennai and Mumbai started functioning **since 1982**.

## About Cervical Cancer

- Cervical cancer is cancer that starts in the **cells of the cervix**.
  - The cervix is the lower, narrow end of the uterus (womb). The cervix connects the uterus to the vagina (birth canal).
- Almost all cervical cancer cases (99%) are linked to infection with **high-risk human papillomaviruses (HPV)**, an extremely common virus transmitted through sexual contact.
- Cervical cancer is the **fourth most common cancer in women**.
  - Cervical cancer ranks as the **2nd most frequent cancer among women in India** and the 2nd most frequent cancer among women between 15 and 44 years of age.
- **Prevention: Effective primary (HPV vaccination)** and secondary prevention approaches (screening for, and treating precancerous lesions) will prevent most cervical cancer cases.
- **Treatment:** When diagnosed, cervical cancer is one of the most successfully treatable forms of cancer, as long as it is detected early and managed effectively.

Cancers diagnosed in late stages can also be controlled with appropriate treatment and palliative care.

Source: [TH](#)

## Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought

### **Syllabus: Miscellaneous**

#### **Context**

- Iran's Mahsa Amini Awarded '**Sakharov Freedom Prize**' of 2023

#### **About**

- Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) have awarded the 2023 '**Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought**' to ***Jina Mahsa Amini and the Woman, Life, Freedom Movement in Iran.***
  - The award ceremony is scheduled for December 13.

#### **Mahsa Amini**

- She was a Kurdish-Iranian woman who **died in police custody in Iran**, has been ***posthumously*** awarded the European Union's Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought.
- Her death sparked massive women-led protests in Iran. Under the slogan "Woman, Life, Freedom", they have been protesting against the hijab law and other discriminatory laws.

#### **Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought:**

- The Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought is awarded **each year by the European Parliament.**
- It was **set up in 1988** to honour individuals and organisations defending human rights and fundamental freedoms.
- It is named in honour of **Soviet physicist and political dissident Andrei Sakharov** and the prize money is 50 000 Euros.
  - **Sakharov was a Nobel Peace Prize laureate.**
- Last year, the European Parliament awarded the prize to the brave people of Ukraine, represented by their President, elected leaders, and civil society.

Source: [TOI](#)