



DAILY CURRENT AFFAIRS

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Cyclone Tej

Syllabus: GS1/ Important Geophysical Phenomenon

Context

- The **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** predicted that **Cyclone Tej**, a depression gathering force in the Arabian Sea, intensified into an '**extremely severe cyclonic storm**' near the coasts of Oman and Yemen.

More about the News

- It developed from a low-pressure area in the southeast Arabian Sea and intensified into a depression.
- Currently, it is moving west-northwest towards Maharashtra's coast.
- Cyclone Tej may bring heavy rainfall, strong winds, storm surges, and coastal flooding to the affected areas.

Increase in Frequency of Arabian Sea Cyclones:

- **Changing Ocean and Atmosphere Patterns:** Alterations in ocean and atmosphere warming patterns are causing more frequent and severe tropical cyclones in the Eastern Arabian Sea, near India's west coast.
- **Indian Ocean Dipole's Role:** The positive phase of the Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), akin to the Indian Nino, results in warmer sea surface temperatures and increased rainfall in the western Indian Ocean region.
- **Human-Induced Impact:** The recent surge in extremely severe post-monsoon cyclonic storms in the Arabian Sea is attributed to anthropogenic factors, marking a shift away from natural variability. Human-induced climate change is amplifying the frequency and intensity of cyclones in the Arabian Sea.

What are Cyclones?

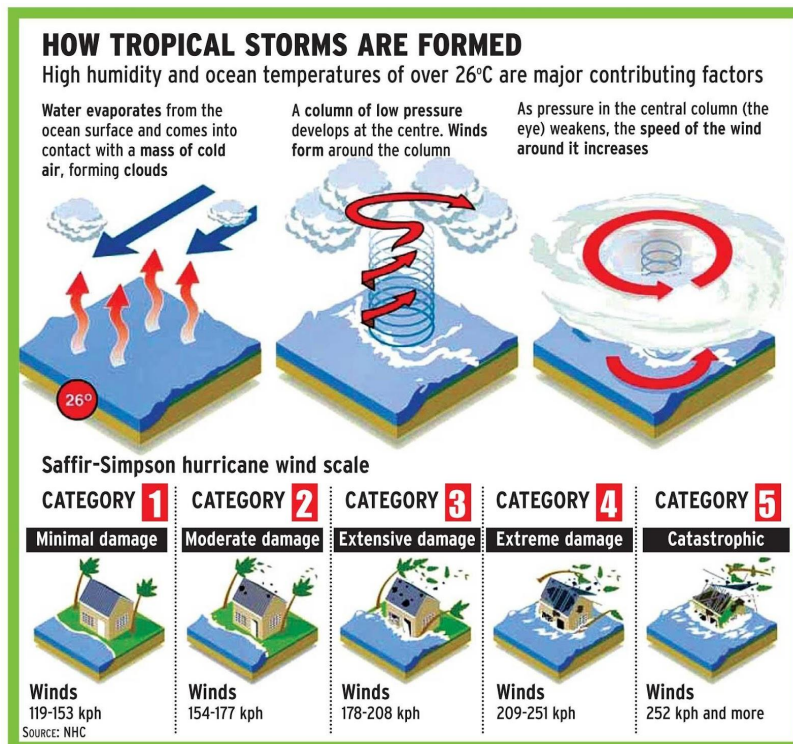
- A cyclone is any low-pressure area with winds spiraling inwards and is **caused by atmospheric disturbances** around a **low-pressure area** distinguished by **swift** and **often destructive air circulation**.
- The **air** circulates inward in an **anticlockwise direction** in the **Northern hemisphere** and **clockwise** in the **Southern hemisphere**.
- The center of a cyclone is a **calm area**. It is called the **eye of the storm**. The **diameter** of the eye varies from **10 to 30 km**. It is a region free of clouds and has light winds.
- Around this calm and clear eye, there is a **cloud region of about 150 km** in size. In this region, there are **high-speed winds** (150–250 km/h) and **thick clouds** with heavy rain. Away from this region the wind speed **gradually decreases**.
- A **large** cyclone is a **violently rotating air mass** in the atmosphere, **10 to 15 km high**.
- A cyclone is known by **different names** in different parts of the world as:

Name	Region
Hurricane	American continent.
Typhoon	Philippines and Japan
Willy-Willy	Australia
Cyclone	Indian Subcontinent

Formation of Cyclones

- Before cloud formation, water takes up heat from the atmosphere to change into vapour. When **water vapour** changes back to liquid form as raindrops, this **heat is released** to the atmosphere.

- The heat released to the atmosphere warms the air around. The **air tends to rise and causes a drop in pressure**. More air rushes to the center of the storm. This cycle is repeated.
- The chain of events ends with the formation of a **very low-pressure system** with **very high-speed** winds revolving around it. It is this weather condition that is called a cyclone.
- **Factors** like **wind speed, wind direction, temperature** and **humidity** contribute to the development of cyclones.
- The **conditions** which favour the formation and intensification of tropical cyclone storms are:
 - Sea surface with a temperature higher than 27° C,
 - Coriolis force,
 - Small differences in the vertical wind speed,
 - Weak- low-pressure area.



Nomenclature

- The names are **maintained** and **updated** by an international committee of the **World Meteorological Organization**.
- The tropical cyclones /hurricanes are named **neither after any particular person, nor with any preference in alphabetical sequence**.
- The **Regional Specialised Meteorological Centres (RSMCs)** – They are responsible for **monitoring** and **prediction** of tropical cyclones over their respective regions. They are **also responsible for naming** the cyclones.
- There is a **strict procedure** to determine a list of tropical cyclone names in an ocean basin(s) by the **Tropical Cyclone Regional Body responsible** for that basin(s) at its **annual/biennial** meeting.
- The importance for naming tropical cyclones:

- It helps to **identify** each individual tropical cyclone.
- It **facilitates disaster risk awareness, preparedness, management and reduction**.
- **Local and international media** become focused on the tropical cyclone.
- It **removes confusion** where there are **multiple** cyclonic systems over a region.
- **Warnings** reach a much **wider audience very rapidly**, if a name is associated with it.

India Meteorological Department (IMD)

- It was established in **1875**.
- It is the principal government agency in **all matters relating to meteorology and allied subjects**.
- It is under the **Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES)**.

Source: TH

Electoral Bonds

Syllabus: GS2/Indian Polity

In News

- The former Chief Election Commissioner of India, SY Quraishi, spoke on the need for **transparency in political funding and Electoral Bonds**.

What is an Electoral Bond?

- Government of India notified the **Electoral Bond scheme in 2018**.
- An electoral bond is like a **promissory note** that can be bought by any Indian citizen or company incorporated in India from select branches of State Bank of India.
- The citizen or corporate can then **donate the same to any eligible political party of his/her choice**.

How does it Work?

- The bonds are issued in **multiples of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 100,000 and Rs 1 crore**.
- The receiver can encash the bonds through the party's verified account. The electoral bond will be valid **only for fifteen days**.
- The electoral bonds are available for purchase for **10 days at the beginning of every quarter**.
 - An additional period of **30 days shall be specified by the government in the year of Lok Sabha elections**.
- **Eligibility:** Any party that is **registered under section 29A of the Representation of the Peoples Act, 1951** and has secured **at least one**

percent of the votes polled in the **most recent** General elections or Assembly elections is eligible to receive electoral bonds.

- **Anonymous Donation:** The electoral bonds **will not bear the name of the donor**. Thus, the political party might not be aware of the donor's identity.
- **Tax exemption:** A donor will get a **deduction** and the recipient, or the political party, will get **tax exemption**, provided returns are filed by the political party.

Need for the Electoral Bonds

- The government contended that it would make **political donations transparent** while also protecting the identity of the donor.
- The electoral bonds would keep a **tab on the use of black money** for funding elections.

Concerns with Electoral Bonds

- **Lack of Transparency:** The government amended Section 29C of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, effectively exempting political parties from informing the ECI about the details of contributions made to them through electoral bonds.
 - This would **impact transparency** and keep citizens from vital information about how much contribution a political party received and through what source.
- **Influx of Black Money:** Opponents of the electoral bond scheme argue that since the identity of the donor has been kept anonymous, **it could lead to an influx of black money**.
- **Corporate Funding:** Earlier there was a cap on the amount of profit a corporation can donate and required the entity to disclose this amount and the name of the beneficiary political party but now, **there is no limit to the amount companies can donate**.
 - This could increase **opacity in political funding** and the danger of exchange of advances between such companies by political parties.
- **Funding by Foreign Companies:** The amendment to the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, 2010 (FCRA), allowing foreign companies to fund Indian political parties, could expose Indian politics and democracy to international lobbyists having their own agendas.
- **Infringing the "Right to Know":** The opacity and anonymity made political parties more unanswerable and unaccountable to the citizens at large.
- **Derailing of Election Commission of India guidelines:** The ECI said that the amendments derailed its 2014 guidelines on disclosure of expenditure and contributions received by political parties.

Conclusion

- All election funding should be made **completely transparent** so that voters know who is funding whom.
- A set of rules on limiting funding shall be brought **to prevent private interests** from unduly influencing elections or Governments.
- Elections should be a **more level playing field** so that good politicians, candidates and parties with less funds also stand a chance of competing in elections.

Source: [IE](#)

SC's 'no fundamental Right to marry'

Syllabus: GS2/Features of Indian Constitution

In News

- Recently some constitutional experts have raised a question on the [recent verdict of the Supreme Court of India](#), with respect to same sex marriage.
 - Recently, the SC agreed that there is **no fundamental right to marry** under the Constitution.

Legality of Same-Sex Marriages in India

- The Right to marry is a **statutory right** rather than a fundamental or constitutional right under the Indian Constitution.
- Even though marriage is governed by a number of legislative acts, India's Supreme Court rulings are the only ones that have led to marriage's recognition as a Fundamental right.
- The right to marry is inextricably linked to the **liberty guaranteed by the Constitution** as a fundamental right, as is the ability of each individual to make decisions to exercise one's liberty to lead a respectful life.
- In the **Supriyo Chakraborty case**, the Supreme Court of India ruled that marriage is **not a fundamental right**. Because of this, the Court ruled that same-sex couples cannot get married. Experts believe that this is a wrong decision.
- Nonetheless, the court unanimously ordered that same-sex couples be shielded from harassment. The Court also issued directives to raise awareness among the authorities in this regard and even ordered the formation of a committee to investigate several matters.

- According to **SC judgment in Navtej Singh Johar and others v. Union of India (2018)**, **one** is entitled to all constitutional rights likewise, LGBTQ people "are entitled, as all other citizens, to the full range of constitutional rights including the liberties protected by the Constitution" in addition to having "equal protection of the law".
- SC in the **NALSA case** held that persons are entitled to identify their own gender. They may be born as males but if they want to identify as females or transgenders, they are entitled to do so.
- Pursuant to that, the **Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Act** was passed by Parliament which provides the procedure for changing one's

gender and protection against discrimination in diverse establishments, private or state.

Problems faced by LGBTQ+ community

- **Discrimination and Stigmatization:** which manifest in various ways, such as employment discrimination, housing discrimination, and exclusion from certain social and religious communities.
- **Violence and Hate Crimes:** Hate crimes, harassment, and physical violence against LGBTQ+ individuals are ongoing concerns. These incidents have serious physical, emotional, and psychological consequences.
- **Mental Health Issues:** LGBTQ+ individuals are at higher risk of experiencing mental health challenges, including depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts, often because of social isolation, discrimination, and family rejection.
- **HIV/AIDS Disparities:** LGBTQ+ individuals, particularly gay and bisexual men, continue to be disproportionately affected by HIV/AIDS. Access to healthcare and prevention methods like Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) remains a serious concern.

Human Rights Declaration

- Experts argue that the Court ignored the fact that India was an original signatory to the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)**, the founding document of all human rights in the world.
- As India is a signatory to the UDHR, and as such, state legislatures and the national parliament must enact laws that support the UDHR.
- More significantly, Indian courts have interpreted laws and the Constitution in accordance with the UDHR and other international agreements.
- The Supreme Court held, citing **Article 16 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights** and the **Puttaswamy case**, that the right to marry the person of one's choice is **fundamental to Article 21** of the Constitution.

Way Forward

- The society should spread awareness about the same-sex marriage and to continue advocating for legal recognition and societal acceptance to ensure equal marriage rights for all couples, regardless of their gender or sexual orientation.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

EU report calls for 2% global wealth tax on Billionaires

Syllabus: GS3/Economy

Context

- The European Union Tax Observatory in its '**Global Tax Evasion Report 2024**' calls for 2% global wealth tax on billionaires.

Key Findings of the Report

- The **automatic exchange of bank information** in reducing offshore tax evasion by a factor of three over the past 10 years.

Do you know?

- The automatic exchange of information was introduced in **2017 to fight offshore tax evasion** by wealthy individuals.
 - In 2023, more than 100 countries exchanged information on the deposits of non-residents to foreign tax authorities as part of the common reporting standard.
- **Very low effective tax rates:** Report shows that global billionaires have very low personal effective tax rates of between 0% and 0.5% of their wealth.
 - A persistently **large amount of profit, nearly \$1 trillion, is shifted to tax havens** in 2022, which is equivalent to 35% of all the profits booked by multinational companies outside of their headquarter country.
 - The **global loss of tax revenue** due to this shifting appears to have stagnated at about 10% of corporate tax revenue collected.
 - The **global minimum tax has been dramatically weakened.**
 - In 2021, more than 140 countries and territories agreed to implement a pioneering minimum tax of 15% on multinational profits, which was expected to increase global tax revenues by 10%.
 - The report **red-flagged** the trend of **'greenwashing the global minimum tax'** wherein MNCs can use 'green' tax credits for low carbon transition to reduce their tax rates way below the minimum of 15%.
 - New forms of aggressive **tax competition** are emerging with adverse effects on government revenue and inequality.
 - The ongoing **subsidies race for green-energy producers** may more than offset the revenue gains from the global minimum corporate tax.

Tax Evasion and Tax Avoidance

Tax evasion

- Tax evasion is a form of tax fraud that involves the use of illegal methods to conceal income or information from tax authorities to avoid the assessment or payment of taxes.
- Tax evasion is a serious offence. Entities that are found liable can be fined, jailed, or both.
 - The offender is given a penalty or punishment of minimum rigorous imprisonment to a minimum of 6 months to a maximum period of seven years and fine if tax evaded exceeds 25 lakhs.

Tax avoidance

- It is the use of legal methods to reduce taxable income or tax owed. Individual taxpayers and corporations can use forms of tax avoidance to lower their tax bills.
 - Tax credits, deductions, income exclusion, and loopholes are forms of tax avoidance.

Impacts of Tax evasion

- Less Tax for the Government;
- Creation/Growth of Mass Poverty;
- Uncontrollable Inflation;
- Investment on Gold, Stones and Jewelers;
- Transfer of Indian Funds Abroad to Safe Havens;
- Corruption;
- Effect on GDP of the country due to less tax collection;
- Higher tax rate on existing taxpayers;

Recommendations made by report

- The report makes recommendations **to reconcile globalisation with tax justice** with a **common theme of focusing on reducing the tax deficit** of multinational companies and wealthy individuals. These include:
 - Reform the international agreement on minimum corporate taxation to implement a rate of 25% and remove the loophole in it that fosters tax competition.
 - Introduce a new global minimum tax for the world's billionaires equal to 2% of their wealth.
 - Institute mechanisms to tax wealthy people who have been long-term residents in a country and choose to move to a low-tax country.
 - Implement unilateral measures to collect some of the tax deficits of multinational companies and billionaires in case global agreements on these issues fail.
 - Move towards the creation of a Global Asset Registry to better fight tax evasion.
 - Strengthen the application of economic substance and anti-abuse rules.

Wealth Tax in India

- It is levied on the wealth of the taxpayer and it is governed by the Wealth Tax Act, 1957.
 - It is to be noted that the Wealth-tax Act, 1957 is abolished with effect from 1-4-2016.
- **Basic provisions:** Wealth-tax is levied on following persons only:
 - An individual;
 - A Hindu undivided family (HUF); and
 - A company.
- Persons other than individuals, **Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs) and companies are not liable to pay wealth tax.**
- A partnership firm is not liable to wealth tax, but the assets of the partnership firm are charged to tax in the hands of the partners of the firm in the form of 'Interest in partnership firm'.

- Similarly, association of persons (not being a co-operative housing society) is not liable to wealth tax, but the assets of the association of persons are charged to tax in the hands of its members in the form of 'Interest in partnership firm'.

Entities which are not liable to wealth-tax in India:

- (a) any company registered under section 25 of the Companies Act;
- (b) any co-operative society;
- (c) any social club;
- (d) any political party;
- (e) a Mutual Fund specified under section 10 of the Income-tax Act; and
- (f) Reserve Bank of India

Source: TH

Ecological Health of the Himalayas

Syllabus: GS3/Environment

Context:

- The **Ministry of Environment and Forest (MoEF)** filed an affidavit before the Supreme Court for taking steps to assess the **carrying capacity of the 13 Himalayan** states in a time-bound manner.
 - 13 Himalayan Indian States/Union Territories, namely *Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, Assam and West Bengal*, stretching across 2500 km.

What is the carrying capacity of a region?

- Carrying capacity of a region is based on the **maximum population size** that an ecosystem or environment **can sustainably support over a specific period** without causing significant degradation or harm to its natural resources and overall health.
- It is crucial in understanding and managing the balance between human activities and the preservation of natural ecosystems to ensure long-term sustainability.
- The carrying capacity for any given area is **not fixed, and can be altered by improved technology**, but mostly it is changed for the worse by pressures which accompany a population increase.

Vulnerabilities of Himalayan region

- The Himalayan ecosystem is vulnerable and susceptible to the impacts and consequences of changes on account of **natural causes**, climate change resulting from **anthropogenic emissions**; and **developmental paradigms of modern society**.

- It has led to significant disruption in ecosystems leading to shifts in range, migration patterns, seasonal activities and abundance of territorial and marine species, affecting the livelihood of resource dependent communities.
- Such threats and uncertainties have undermined the socio-economic development of the Indian Himalayan Region.

Importance of Himalayas

- Nearly 50 million people reside in this region, which is characterised by a diverse demographic, and versatile economic, environmental, social and political systems.
- **Climate:** The Himalayas prevent India from cold Siberian winds. Without the Himalayas, India would have been a dry, cold land.
 - They intercept **south-west monsoon** winds, which are responsible for monsoon rain, very **crucial for agriculture and the economy** of India.
- **Natural resources:** The Himalayas are a source of **perennial rivers** viz. Indus, Ganga and the Brahmaputra river system.
 - They provide **minerals and forest produce** for the Economic development of the country.
 - They are the **source of soil for the fertile plains** of northern India as well as the region of North East.
- **Defence, Tourism and Pilgrimage:** The Himalayas form a natural **boundary with China and Myanmar**, thus providing a cover against any adventure by the foreign militaries.
 - The **Doons, Valleys**, scenic hill stations and religious sites attract millions of tourists from India and the world.

Scientific Studies

- The Himalayas are home to numerous **geological, as well as geographical phenomena** like formation of earth, rock system, geomorphology and **studying the recent climate change**.
- In order to manage and conserve biodiversity, the **MoEF notified, in the year 2002, Eco-Sensitive Zones (ESZs)** around the Protected Areas, and Ecologically Sensitive Areas (ESA) that have unique biological resources to protect the biodiversity in areas having ecological significance.
- On the basis of proposals and recommendations of the State Government, the MoEF has notified the **ESZs under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**.
 - **Section '3'** of the **ESZ Notification** provides the Guidelines for preparation of the Zonal Master Plan (ZMP) by the respective State Government.

- As far as the **13 States of Indian Himalayan Region** are concerned, **2 ESAs and 92 ESZs** have been already **notified**.

Initiative to overall development of Himalayan ecosystems

- **The National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem (NMSHE) 2010:** It is coordinated and implemented by the **Department of Science and Technology (DST)**, aims to understand the complex processes affecting the Himalayan ecosystem and evolve suitable management and policy measures for sustaining and safeguarding the Himalayan ecosystem.
 - NMSHE attempts to **address issues concerning** Himalayan Glaciers and associated hydrological consequences, Biodiversity conservation and protection, Wildlife conservation and protection, Traditional knowledge societies and their livelihood, and Planning for sustaining of Himalayan ecosystem.
- **Other initiatives** like the *Indian Himalayas Climate Adaptation Programme*, *Secure Himalaya Project*, and *Guidelines on 'Carrying Capacity in the Indian Himalayan Region'* etc are vital for the overall development of the Indian Himalayan Region.

What needs to be done?

- It is highlighted that the suggestion made by the government focuses on one institution, i.e., the G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment, while others are just a part of the technical group.
 - Almost **all the other institutes** are important players in their respective domains and **should be equal partners in policy making**.
- **People-centric approach:** It needs to involve the local population and grass-roots bodies, from panchayats and other urban local bodies, in determining the carrying capacity of the Indian Himalayan Region.
- **Focus on social aspect:** There is a wider and longer term need for assessing the overall sustainable capacity of the environment, including all biological species, food, habitat, water including ecology and agriculture.
 - The expert committee should be asked to focus on the **social aspects or population sustainability** of the respective States.
- Sustaining the Himalayan ecosystem as a National Mission, will focus on the rapid generation of four types of national capacities, dealing with Human and knowledge capacities, Institutional capacities, Capacities for evidence based policy building and governance and Continuous self learning for balancing between forces of Nature and actions of mankind.

Source: [TH](#)

Fluorescence: making animals glow

Syllabus: GS3/ Science & Technology

Context

- A recent study reported that the bodies of animals belonging to all the known mammalian orders fluoresce in some way.

Fluorescence

- When an object absorbs some light of higher energy (like blue colour) and releases it at lower energy (like red colour).
- It usually happens when an electron absorbs a photon, or a particle of light, jumps to a higher energy level, before releasing that energy and jumping back down.
- In this process, the electron's spin must not change. If its spin changes, the process is called phosphorescence.

Applications of Fluorescence

- **Biomedical Imaging:** Fluorescence is widely used in medical diagnostics, such as fluorescence microscopy, which helps in the study of cellular and tissue structures. It's crucial for disease detection and research.
- **Environmental Monitoring:** Fluorescent markers are employed in environmental studies to track pollutants, monitor water quality, and detect contaminants, which is crucial for environmental protection.
- **Forensic Science:** Fluorescence plays a role in forensics, where it can be used to detect trace evidence, such as bloodstains or fingerprints, aiding in criminal investigations.
- **Pharmaceuticals and Drug Development:** Fluorescence is vital in drug discovery and development, helping researchers study the binding of drugs to target molecules and monitor biochemical reactions.
- **Material Science:** In material science, fluorescence is used to analyze the properties and behaviors of various materials, facilitating the development of advanced materials.
- **Chemical Analysis:** Fluorescence spectroscopy is used in chemical analysis to detect and quantify various compounds, making it invaluable in analytical chemistry.
- **Astronomy and Space Exploration:** Fluorescence can be applied in the study of celestial objects and extraterrestrial environments, providing insights into the composition and conditions of distant objects in space.

Rayleigh and Mie Scattering

Rayleigh Scattering:

- Matter and radiation interact in a variety of ways.
- The sky is blue because air molecules scatter light, and they scatter light of shorter wavelengths more strongly. Since blue light has the shortest wavelength (in the visible spectrum), it is scattered the most and the sky appears blue. This is called Rayleigh scattering.

Mie scattering:

- Mie scattering is elastic scattered light of particles that have a diameter similar to or larger than the wavelength of the incident light. The Mie signal is proportional to the square of the particle diameter.
- For instance, clouds are white because of Mie scattering, which is due to light scattered by larger particles like water droplets.
- Mie scattering is much stronger than Rayleigh scattering and, therefore, a potential source of interference for this weaker light scattering process.

Source: TH

Facts In News

Small Savings Instruments (SSIs)

Syllabus :GS 3/Economy

In News

The government raised the interest rate on the five-year recurring deposit scheme for the December quarter and retained the rates for all other small savings schemes.

- The government reviews the rate every quarter.

About Small Savings Instruments (SSIs)

- They are a set of **savings instruments** managed by the **central government** with an aim to **encourage citizens** to save **regularly irrespective of their age**.
- It comprises instruments, including the National Saving Certificate (NSC), Public Provident Fund (PPF), Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP) and Sukanya Samriddhi Scheme.
- The money raised from people who save through these schemes goes to the Centre and is put into a fund called the **National Small Savings Fund (NSSF)**.
- **The government resets the interest rate at the beginning of every quarter.**
 - Theoretically, since 2016, interest rate re-setting has been based on yields of government securities of the corresponding maturity, with some spread on the scheme for senior citizens, as advised by the **Shyamala Gopinath Committee**.

Latest Developments

- **National Savings (Monthly Income Account) Scheme, 2019** has been amended through National Savings (Monthly Income Account) (Amendment) Scheme, 2023 and the maximum investment limit has been raised from ₹ four lakh fifty thousand to ₹ nine lakh for a single account and from ₹ nine lakh to ₹ 15 lakh for a joint account with effect from 1st April 2023.

- Likewise, the **Senior Citizen Savings Scheme, 2019** has been amended through **Senior Citizens Savings (Amendment) Scheme, 2023** and the maximum investment limit has been raised from ₹ 15 lakh to ₹ 30 lakh .

Do you know ?

- The **Mahila Samman Savings Certificate Scheme (MSSC)** is a newly launched small savings scheme of the Government to commemorate the Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav and is exclusively for women and girls in India.
- It has been made available for a **two-year period up to March 2025**.
- Some of the salient features of the schemes include:
 - MSSC accounts may be opened by women of any age group including the **girl child** with a **minimum deposit of ₹1000/-** and **maximum deposit of ₹2 Lakhs for a period of two years**.
 - The interest rate for MSSC is **7.5% p.a.** which is **compounded quarterly**.
 - The facility of partial withdrawal and premature closure on compassionate grounds are also available under this Scheme.

Source:[TH](#)

Project UDBHAV

Syllabus: GS3/Defense

Context:

- The Defence Minister launched '**Project UDBHAV**' during the inauguration of the **Indian Military Heritage Festival**.

About

- **Project UDBHAV** (translates as '*origin*' or '*genesis*') is a collaboration between the **Indian Army and the United Service Institution of India (USI)**, which aims to **revisit the roots of India's ancient military thoughts**.
- It acknowledges the vintage scriptures and writings of our Nation, that span centuries in the past and contain profound knowledge that **can benefit modern military strategies**.

Objectives:

- To synthesise ancient wisdom with contemporary military practices;
- Forging a unique and holistic approach to address modern security challenges;
- To integrate age-old wisdom with contemporary military pedagogy through interdisciplinary research, workshops and leadership seminars;
- To facilitate in-depth understanding of our knowledge systems and philosophies;

The Ancient Indian Knowledge System

- It is rooted in a 5000 years old civilisational legacy, which has attached great value to knowledge; witnessed by intellectual texts, world's largest collection of manuscripts, thinkers and different schools of thoughts in so many domains of knowledge.

Rationale behind the Project UDBHAV

- **Arthashastra of Chanakya:** It underscores the importance of strategic partnerships, alliances and diplomacy, aligning with modern military practices such as international cooperation and soft power projection.
 - Chanakya's teachings on statecraft and warfare are studied by various institutions the world over.
- **Thirukkural of Thiruvalluvar:** It advocates ethical conduct in all endeavours, including warfare, that aligns with modern military codes of ethics of just war and principles of Geneva Convention.
- Apart from ancient texts, a study of **prominent military campaigns and leaders** like Chandragupta Maurya, Ashoka and Cholas flourished and expanded their influence during their times.
- **The Naval Battle of Saraighat in 1671**, led by **Lachit Borphukan**, stands as a stellar example of the use of clever diplomatic negotiations to buy time, employ psychological warfare, focus on military intelligence and exploiting the strategic weakness of the Mughals.

[Source: PIB](#)

Kasturi Cotton Bharat

Syllabus: GS3/Indian Economy

In News

- The Union Textiles Minister launched the website of **Kasturi Cotton Bharat to provide necessary information and updates on it.**

About

- **Kasturi Cotton Brand:** In order to attain the objective of building the image of Indian cotton at Global level, the Ministry of Textiles had announced the “Kasturi Cotton India” Brand of cotton on the eve of **World Cotton Day on 7th October 2020.**

The Kasturi Cotton Bharat

- It is a joint initiative by the Ministry of Textiles, the Cotton Corporation of India, Trade Bodies & Industry.
- **Aim:** To work on the **principle of self-regulation** by owning complete responsibility of **Branding, Traceability and Certification of Indian Cotton** to enhance its' competitiveness in the global market and create a sustainable ecosystem for all stakeholders involved.

Source: [PIB](#)

Matsya Sampada Jagrukta Abhiyan

Syllabus: **GS3/Indian Economy**

In News

- Union Minister Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, launched Matsya Sampada Jagrukta Abhiyan on the occasion of completion of **three successful years of implementation of Pradhan Mantri Matasya Sampada Yojna (PMMSY)**.

Pradhan Mantri Matasya Sampada Yojna (PMMSY)

- It is the flagship scheme of the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, and **was launched in 2020**.
- **Aim:** To give momentum to the ‘sunrise’ fisheries sector through **consolidated efforts from various schemes and initiatives**.
- The PMMSY is an umbrella scheme with **two separate Components** namely **Central Sector Scheme (CS)** and **Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS)**.
- The Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) Component is further segregated into **Non-beneficiary oriented and beneficiary orientated subcomponents/activities:**
 - Enhancement of Production and Productivity
 - Infrastructure and Post-harvest Management
 - Fisheries Management and Regulatory Framework.

Source: **PIB**

Air Quality Index (AQI)

Syllabus :**GS 3/Environment**







In News

- According to a Central Pollution Control Board bulletin, The air quality in Delhi slipped into the “very poor” category on Sunday and it is expected to remain so for the next three days.

Air Quality Index (AQI)

- The Air Quality Index is a tool for effective communication of air quality status to people in terms that are easy to understand.
- The Minister for Environment, Forests & Climate Change in 2014 launched ‘The National Air Quality Index’ (AQI) .
- The formulation of the index was a continuation of the initiatives **under Swachh Bharat Mission**.

- It helps the public and the government understand the condition of the air and what subsequent measures are to be taken to combat the situation, based on its severity.
- There are **six categories of AQI**, namely

AQI	Remark	Color Code	Possible Health Impacts
0-50	Good		Minimal impact
51-100	Satisfactory		Minor breathing discomfort to sensitive people
101-200	Moderate		Breathing discomfort to the people with lungs, asthma and heart diseases
201-300	Poor		Breathing discomfort to most people on prolonged exposure
301-400	Very Poor		Respiratory illness on prolonged exposure
401-500	Severe		Affects healthy people and seriously impacts those with existing diseases

Initiatives

- The Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) had announced the imposition of **Stage 2 of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)** as there was a prediction that Delhi's air quality is likely to worsen.
 - The **GRAP is a set of emergency measures** taken to reduce air pollution.
 - The authorities in the National Capital Region (NCR) have been asked to hike the parking fee and increase the service of CNG/electric buses and metro trains to discourage people from using private vehicles.
- The Delhi government had earlier launched a 15-point Winter Action Plan to curb air pollution.
- It also banned the sale, manufacturing, storage and bursting of firecrackers.

Sources:[TH](#)

Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations

Syllabus: GS2/IR-Bilateral relations

In News

- Recently, India asserted that it did **not violate diplomatic norms** as enshrined in the **Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations**, while dealing with Canada.

About

- According to Canada's Foreign Minister, unilateral revocation of diplomatic privileges and immunities is contrary to international law, including the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations.
- However, India claims that reduction in the number of Canadian diplomats in India in fact did not impact the staff requirement in the Canadian consulates, and it does not violate the Vienna Convention.

Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations

- The Convention was adopted in 1961, is a foundational document of modern diplomacy. It updated and codified diplomatic practices that had evolved over centuries.
- It is a comprehensive treaty that covers various aspects of diplomatic relations, including the establishment of diplomatic missions, the status and privileges of diplomatic agents, and the termination of diplomatic relations.
- It has been ratified by 193 countries, making it one of the most widely accepted international treaties.
- The convention says that persons working as diplomats are “inviolable” and can therefore not be arrested or detained.
- Host nations hold the responsibility to protect diplomats from attacks on their freedom and dignity.
- The treaty says that foreign envoys cannot be prosecuted or punished by the host country for actions carried out in the line of duty.
- It also gives host countries the right to expel envoys.

Source: [The Hindu](#)

Mission Mahila Sarathi

Syllabus: GS2/ Governance

In News

- Recently, the Chief minister of UP launched **Mission Mahila Sarathi** in Ayodhya under the **Mission Shakti Abhiyan** and flagged off 51 ordinary buses.

About Mission Mahila Sarathi

- The 51 buses introduced during the launch of the mission will be operated exclusively by women as drivers and conductors.
- It will encourage more women empowerment, safety and progress, as a larger objective of umbrella Mission Shakti Abhiyan.

Mission Shakti Abhiyan

- **Launched by the government of Uttar Pradesh (UP)**, India, with the aim of promoting women's empowerment and ensuring their safety and well-being.
- It aims to raise awareness about women's rights and educate them about legal provisions and support mechanisms available to them.
- The government also launched a "**Shakti App**" to provide women with a quick and accessible means to seek help and report incidents of harassment or violence.
- It aims to provide legal aid and support to women who faced legal challenges related to issues such as domestic violence, harassment, or property rights.

Source: [Indian Express](#)