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INSIDE

General Studies-I 3

Syllabus: Indian Culture-Salient aspects of Art Forms

1. Santara (Sallekhana) 3
2. Madhubani and Gond Art 4

Syllabus: Salient features of Indian Society

1. Social media defining self-worth 4
2. NSO Household Consumption Expenditure Surveys and Poverty 6

Syllabus: Globalisation and its effects on Indian society

1. Modernisation vs Westernisation 7

Syllabus: Important Geophysical phenomena

1. Updated India's Coastline Length 8
2. Early Arrival of Monsoon 10

Syllabus: World Physical Geography & Resources

1. Western Disturbance 11

Fact for Prelims (FFP): 13

Syllabus: Indian Culture-Salient aspects of Art Forms

1. Satavahana Dynasty 13
2. Sacred Relics of Lord Buddha 13
3. Piprahwa Relics 14
4. Archaeological Survey of India 15
5. Vikramaditya I of Badami Chalukyas 15
6. Nabakalebara Ritual 16
7. Ayurveda Day 17
8. Keezhadi Excavation 17

Syllabus: Modern Indian History

1. Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore 18
2. Biju Patnaik & Battle of Stalingrad 18
3. 50th Anniversary of Sikkim 19

Syllabus: Salient features of Indian Society

1. Dongria Kondh Tribe 20
2. Jenu Kuruba Tribe 20
3. Kandha Tribe 21
4. Shirui Lily Festival 21
5. Tendu Leaves 22

Syllabus: World Physical Geography & Resources

1. Chenab River 23
2. Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) 23

Syllabus: Miscellaneous

1. Jnanpith Award 24
2. International Booker Prize - 2025 25
3. National Florence Nightingale Awards 2025 25

GENERAL STUDIES-I

Syllabus: Indian Culture-Salient aspects of Art Forms

SANTARA (SALLEKHANA)

Context:

Recently a three-year-old girl in Indore reportedly died after being administered Santhara by a Jain monk, bringing the ancient Jain ritual of voluntary fasting unto death back into public and legal discourse.

About Santhara (Sallekhana):

- **Definition:** Santhara or Sallekhana is a Jain religious vow of voluntary fasting unto death, undertaken to purify the soul and attain moksha.
- **Religious Association:** Practiced in **Jainism** by both monks and laypersons under extreme conditions like terminal illness, old age, or famine.
- **Features:**
 - Involves gradual withdrawal from food and water.
 - Taken only with spiritual maturity and under religious supervision.
 - Involves forgiveness, detachment, and spiritual reflection.



About Key Jain Practices:

Core Doctrines of Jainism:

1. **Ahimsa (Non-violence):** Jains believe in absolute non-violence towards all living beings, including insects and microbes, making it a foundational ethical principle.
2. **Satya (Truthfulness):** Speaking truth is mandatory, but it must not harm others—truth should be spoken with compassion and care.
3. **Asteya (non-stealing):** One must not take anything that is not willingly offered, emphasizing ethical acquisition and honesty.
4. **Brahmacharya (Chastity):** Celibacy for monks and sexual restraint for householders, promoting control over desires and spiritual discipline.
5. **Aparigraha (non-possessiveness):** Detachment from material and emotional possessions is stressed to reduce greed and promote liberation.

Triratna (Three Jewels of Jainism):

1. **Samyak Darshan (Right Faith):** Having correct perception of truth, free from doubts, is the first step toward spiritual liberation.
2. **Samyak Jnana (Right Knowledge):** True knowledge must be free from doubt and error, grounded in understanding reality and karma.
3. **Samyak Charitra (Right Conduct):** Moral and disciplined behavior aligned with Jain principles, essential for attaining moksha (liberation).

Legal Status of Santhara in India:

- **2015 Rajasthan High Court Ruling:** Declared Santhara illegal, equating it with suicide under IPC Section 306.
- **Supreme Court Stay:** In August 2015, the SC stayed the order, recognising the practice under the constitutional right to religious freedom (Article 25).
- **Current Status:** Legally protected as a religious practice, subject to consent and religious guidance.

Significance in Jainism:

- **Spiritual Goal:** Seen as a peaceful, dignified exit from life aimed at shedding karma and achieving liberation (moksha).
- **Historical Practice:** Followed by Jain sages like **Bhadrabahu and Chandragupta** Maurya in Shravanabelagola.
- **Literary References:** Found in Jain texts like **Ratnakaranda Shravakachara** and Tamil works like **Silappadikaram** and

Neelakesi.

Conclusion:

Santhara represents a deeply spiritual and ethical tradition in Jainism, reflecting values of detachment, discipline, and non-violence. While its legality has sparked debates, it continues to be a constitutionally protected religious practice in India. Balancing religious freedom and modern ethics remains crucial in its discourse.

PYQ:

The Pala period is the most significant phase in the history of Buddhism in India. Enumerate. (UPSC - 2020)

MADHUBANI AND GOND ART

Context:

Artists of Madhubani and Gond art met President Droupadi Murmu under the Artists-in-Residence Programme – Kala Utsav at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

About Madhubani and Gond Art:

About Madhubani Art (Mithila Art):

- **Region:** Originates from the **Mithila region of Bihar**; also referred to as **Mithila painting**.
- **What It Is?**
 - A **folk-art form** traditionally created by women on **walls and floors** of huts during auspicious occasions.
 - Now practiced on **cloth, canvas, and handmade paper**.
- **Key Features**
 - **Natural Materials:** Uses **plant-based pigments, cow dung-treated paper, and bamboo pens**.
 - **Bold Outlines:** Black lines made with cow dung and charcoal; filled with vibrant natural colors.
- **Themes:**
 - **Religious:** Depictions of Hindu deities like **Radha-Krishna, Shiva, Saraswati**, etc.
 - **Social:** Scenes from **village life, weddings, and festivals**.
 - **Nature:** Birds, animals, trees (Tulsi, Banyan), sun, and moon.
 - **Cultural Identity:** Symbol of **female creativity** and **rural tradition** passed down through generations.



About Gond Art:

- **Region:** Practiced by **Pardhan Gond tribes of Madhya Pradesh** and adjoining Central Indian states.
- **What It Is?**
 - Tribal art form with roots in **oral storytelling** and **ritualistic practices**.
 - Initially drawn on **walls of homes** to depict **folk tales** and **nature**.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Mythical Narratives:** Depicts **divine stories, village folklore, and animist beliefs**.
 - **Pattern Work:** Fills motifs with **fine dots and lines** to create visual rhythm.
 - **Nature Connection:** Harmonious coexistence of **humans, flora, and fauna**.
 - **Colour Use:** Bright, bold colour schemes with creative compositions.
 - **Global Reach:** Popularized internationally through works like *“The Night Life of Trees”* by **Tara Books**.

[Syllabus: Salient features of Indian Society](#)

SOCIAL MEDIA DEFINING SELF-WORTH

Context: The tragic suicide of young entrepreneur **Misha Agarwal**—reportedly triggered by a drop in **social media followers**—has reignited urgent conversations around the influence of social media on mental health, particularly among adolescents.

- With identity now performed and validated online, social media is emerging as a powerful, yet dangerous mirror of self-worth.

About Social Media:

What Are Social Media?

- Social media refers to **web-based platforms and mobile applications** that enable users to **create, share, and interact** with content and with other users. These platforms include **Instagram, Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube, Snapchat, TikTok**, and others.
- While designed for connection and expression, social media also **reshapes identity**, influences perceptions of reality, and impacts **mental health**, especially among children and adolescents.



Legal Framework Governing Social Media in India:

- **IT Act, 2000:** Primary legislation for regulating online platforms.
- **Intermediary Guidelines, 2021:** Mandate content takedown, user grievance redress, traceability of harmful messages.
- **POCSO Act, 2012:** Prohibits child sexual content and protects children from digital abuse.
- **Consumer Protection Act, 2019:** Addresses misleading advertisements and influencer accountability.
- **Mental Healthcare Act, 2017:** Provides right to access mental health services, including for digital stress-related conditions.

Social Media and Identity Formation in Adolescents:

- Encourages curated, idealized versions of identity for public approval.
- Self-worth becomes dependent on likes, shares, follower count.
- Promotes comparison, performance pressure, and validation-seeking behavior.
- Reinforces trends that reward appearance and online presence over authenticity.

Impact on Adolescents:

- **Adolescents are vulnerable** due to ongoing identity formation.
- **Online and offline** lives are blended—leading to continuous peer scrutiny.
- **Exposure** to filtered realities can cause distorted body image, low self-esteem, and anxiety.
- **Unrealistic routines and trends** (e.g., fitness or beauty challenges) create stress and shame when not met.

Mental Health Implications

- **Increased cases of** body dysmorphia, eating disorders, and social withdrawal.
- **Content encouraging perfection, rebellion, or risk-taking** can trigger emotional distress.
- **Repeated exposure to negative comparisons may lead to depression or suicidal ideation.**
- **Mental health services are underutilized due to lack of awareness and stigma.**

Challenges in Parental Monitoring

- Adolescents often use multiple or fake accounts (e.g., “Finsta”) to hide from adults.
- Excessive surveillance can lead to secrecy and distrust.
- Many parents lack digital literacy and cannot decode trends or online slang.
- Communication gaps widen when monitoring replaces dialogue.

Way Forward:

- **Digital Literacy in Schools:** Include modules on emotional well-being and algorithm awareness.
- **Parental Guidance:** Shift from monitoring to trust-based, curiosity-led conversations.
- **Platform Accountability:** Deprioritize harmful content; show mental health prompts; restrict visibility metrics for minors.
- **Mental Health Services:** Increase budget for school counselors; promote helplines and peer support programs.
- **Regulation of Influencers:** Frame norms for children in sponsored content; enforce transparency in digital advertising.

Conclusion:

Social media is redefining how young people perceive self-worth by linking identity to public validation.

Without proper regulation, digital literacy, and mental health support, this trend can lead to widespread emotional and psychological harm. The solution lies in a balanced approach combining legal safeguards, empathetic parenting, ethical tech design, and community engagement.

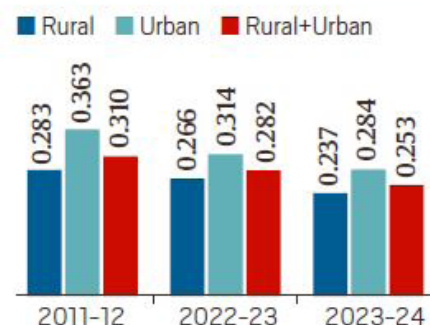
NSO HOUSEHOLD CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE SURVEYS AND POVERTY

TABLE 1: POVERTY RATIOS USING DIFFERENT CUT-OFFS: ALL INDIA

Poverty Line (PL) Cut-offs	Rural			Urban			Rural+urban		
	2011-12	2022-23	2023-24	2011-12	2022-23	2023-24	2011-12	2022-23	2023-24
150	66.6	34.8	27.8	52.8	27.8	21.7	62.6	32.8	26
125	51.3	20.8	14.8	40.1	16.9	11.9	48.1	19.7	13.9
115	43.5	15.8	9.9	34.7	12.9	8.8	41	15	9.6
100	30.9	9.6	4.9	26.8	9.3	4.8	29.5	9.5	4.9
85	18.3	4.8	4.2	18.1	4.6	4.1	18.3	4.7	4.2
75	11.1	4.2	3.7	12.4	4.1	3.6	11.5	4.2	3.7
50	3.9	2.8	2.5	4.3	2.7	2.4	4	2.8	2.4

Note: 1. 100 per cent PL refers to Rangarajan Committee's Poverty Line, adjusted for CPI-based inflation.
 2. Rural + Urban data are the weighted average; weights being their respective shares in the estimated persons. Source: Estimates using Household Consumer Expenditure Surveys of NSSO

Table 2: Gini Coefficient of Total Consumption Expenditure, All India



Source: Report No. 592 (HCES 2023-24), National Statistics Office

Context:

Recent NSO Household Consumption Surveys (2022–23 and 2023–24) and a World Bank report confirm a sharp fall in poverty rates in India, largely driven by high GDP growth and reduced inequality.

Key Highlights of NSO Household Consumption Expenditure Surveys and Poverty:

Key Indicator	Details
Updated Poverty Lines (Rangarajan Committee)	Rural: ₹972 (2011–12) to ₹1,837 (2022–23) to ₹1,940 (2023–24) Urban: ₹1,407 (2011–12) to ₹2,603 (2022–23) to ₹2,736 (2023–24)
Poverty Ratio (All India)	Declined from 29.5% (2011–12) to 9.5% (2022–23) and 4.9% (2023–24)
Extreme Poverty (World Bank definition)	Share of people living below \$2.15/day (PPP) reduced from 16.2% to 2.3% (2011–12 to 2022–23)
Distribution of the Poor	Over 50% of poor are concentrated between 75–100% of the poverty line threshold, enabling better targeting
Consumption Inequality	Gini Coefficient declined from 0.310 (2011–12) to 0.253 (2023–24) , showing improved spending equity
Rural-Urban Contribution	Both contributed equally to poverty reduction; urban areas showed faster inequality reduction
Survey Improvements	Introduced updated thresholds , refined sampling , and expanded sectoral insights in the 2022–23 and 2023–24 rounds

Poverty Trends in India (2011–2024)

- **Sharp Decline in Headcount Ratio:** Poverty fell from **29.5% (2011–12)** to **4.9% (2023–24)** — a reduction of 24.6 percentage points.

- **Global Benchmark Progress:**
 - **Extreme poverty (<\$2.15/day)** dropped from **16.2% to 2.3%** (World Bank).
 - **\$3.65/day poverty line** fell from **61.8% to 28.1%**.
- **Impact of Growth and Inflation:** GDP growth increased to **9.2% in 2023–24**. CPI inflation fell to **5.4%**, aiding purchasing power.
- **Poverty Clustered Near Threshold:** Over **50% of the poor lie just below the poverty line**, making targeted support more effective.

Challenges to Poverty Eradication in India:

- **Vulnerability to Shocks:** Large sections hover around the poverty line and may fall back due to health or climate crises.
- **Uneven Safety Nets:** Welfare coverage, especially for urban poor and migrants, remains patchy (e.g., limited urban PDS access).
- **Food Inflation Concerns:** Food inflation rose to **7.5% in 2023–24**, which disproportionately affects the poor.
- **Data Gaps in Urban Poverty:** Recent surveys underrepresent informal workers and unregulated job sectors.
- **Regional Disparities:** States like **Bihar, Jharkhand, and Odisha** continue to report higher poverty despite national averages improving.

Way Ahead:

- **Targeted Cash Transfers:** Expand schemes like **PM-GKAY** and **DBT for LPG** to reach transient poor above poverty line.
- **Resilient Rural Employment:** Strengthen **NREGA** allocations with climate-resilient job creation.
- **Urban Social Protection Framework:** Develop a unified urban social safety net for gig workers and migrant families.
- **Invest in Education & Nutrition:** Bridge learning and nutritional gaps via **PM-POSHAN** and **Saksham Anganwadi**.
- **Continuous Poverty Tracking:** Institutionalize annual multidimensional poverty audits using real-time data sources.

Conclusion:

India has made commendable strides in poverty reduction, bringing it down to **below 5%** for the first time. This has been driven by **robust GDP growth** and improved consumption equity. Sustained focus on inclusive safety nets and economic resilience will be key to eradicating poverty permanently.

PYQ:

1. Explain various types of revolutions that took place in agriculture after Independence in India. How have these revolutions helped in poverty alleviation and food security in India? (UPSC-2017)

[Syllabus: Globalisation and its effects on Indian society](#)

MODERNISATION VS WESTERNISATION

Context:

Union Minister asserted that while modernisation is essential for national progress, blind westernisation must be resisted to preserve India's cultural identity.

- He stressed the importance of **balancing science and tradition** to realise India's vision of becoming a 'Vishwaguru'.

About Modernisation vs Westernisation:

- **Modernisation:**
 - **Definition:** A comprehensive process involving **technological, institutional, and value-based** transformation aimed at societal development.



- **Features:**
 - **Structural transformation** in economy, polity, and society.
 - **Rationality and scientific temper** over traditional beliefs.
 - **Democratic institutions, mass education, and urbanisation.**
 - Emphasis on **self-sustaining growth** with rising productivity and human development indicators.
- **Westernisation:**
 - **Definition:** Adoption of **Western lifestyles, values, and systems**, often at the cost of traditional cultural practices.
 - **Features:**
 - Popularised by **M.N. Srinivas** in the Indian context.
 - Covers **secular, legal, political, and technological domains.**
 - Includes **dress codes, food habits, language**, and social institutions like live-in relationships.
 - Often conflicts with Indian societal ethos, particularly in rural and traditional contexts.

Impacts of Westernisation on Indian Society:

1. **Cultural Erosion:** Weakening of joint family structures, caste panchayats, and traditional festivals.
E.g. Declining interest among youth in **arranged marriages** and **religious practices**.
2. **Value Conflict:** Clash between individualism (West) and collectivism (Indian tradition).
3. **Widening Social Divide:** Gap between Westernised urban elite and rural traditional masses leading to social tension.
4. **Positive Outcomes:** Progressive laws (e.g., abolition of Sati, child marriage) and human rights awareness stemmed from Western influence.

Modernisation Can Drive India's Progress:

1. **Technological Growth:** Innovations in **biotech, digital governance, and space** can uplift public services.
E.g. India ranks among the top 5 countries in **digital payment adoption** (RBI, 2024).
2. **Institutional Reforms:** Modernisation supports efficient bureaucracy, judicial efficiency, and transparent governance.
3. **Educational Expansion:** Promotes universal access to quality education, enabling human capital formation.
4. **Cultural Resilience through Reform:** India's traditional values can be modernised without being westernised.
E.g. Promotion of Ayurveda and Yoga globally while maintaining scientific validation.
5. **Balanced Development:** Modernisation rooted in Indian values helps bridge the rural–urban divide without alienating cultural identity.

Conclusion:

Modernisation is a **dynamic pathway to national progress** when fused with **cultural rootedness**. India's strength lies in embracing innovation while safeguarding its value systems. The challenge is to advance without losing identity — progress must be inclusive, indigenous, and intentional.

PYQ:

1. 'Globalisation is generally said to promote cultural homogenisation but due to these cultural specificities appear to be strengthened in the Indian society.' Elucidate (UPSC -2018)

[Syllabus: Important Geophysical phenomena](#)

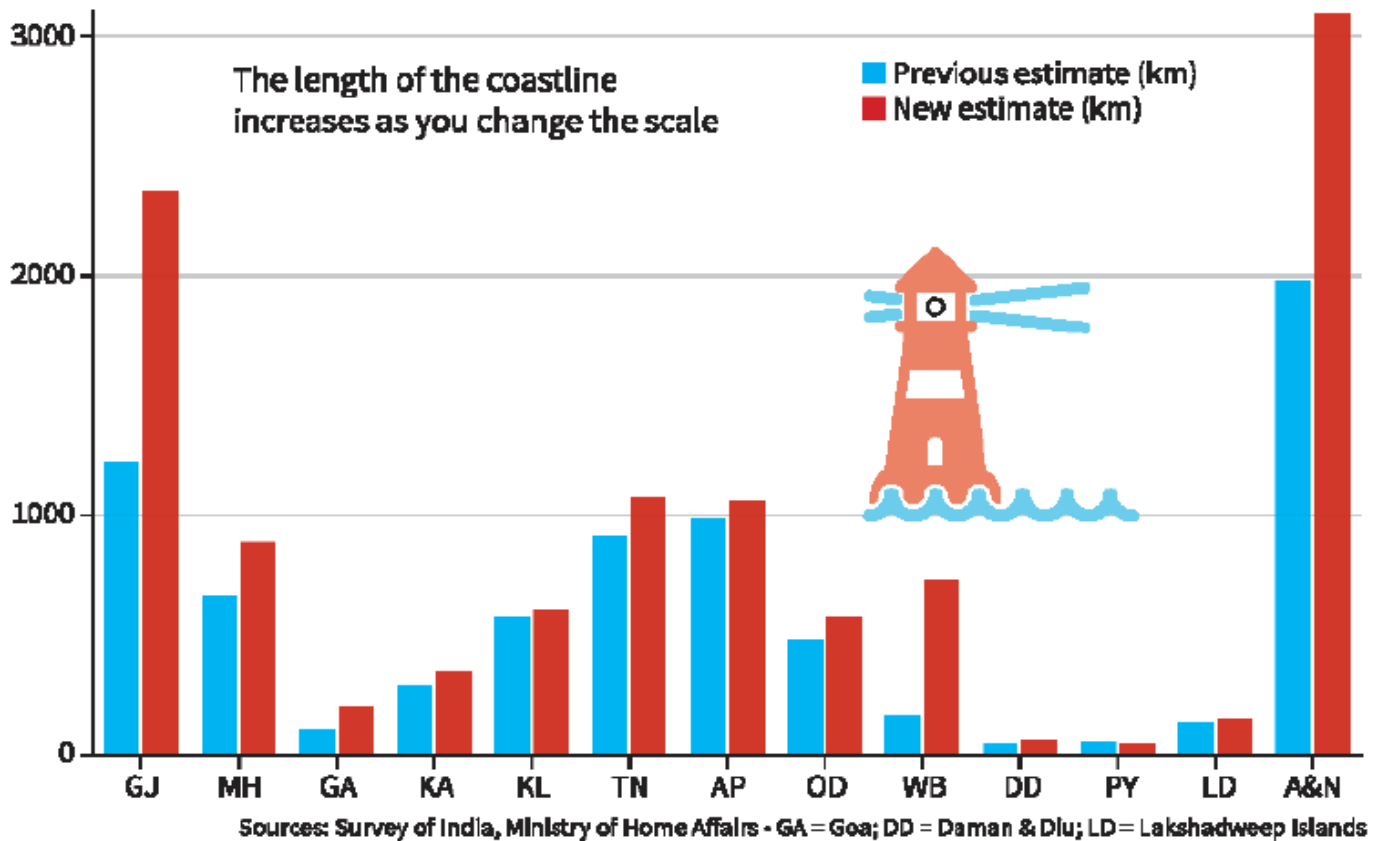
UPDATED INDIA'S COASTLINE LENGTH

Context:

The Ministry of Home Affairs, in its 2023–24 report, updated **India's coastline length to 11,099 km**, up from 7,516.6 km.

- The change stems not from land gain but due to **better mapping precision**, highlighting the **coastline paradox**.

The coast grows



About Updated India's Coastline Length:

India's Coastline Length – Key Overview:

- **Previous Length:** 7,516.6 km (based on 1970s maps at 1:4,500,000 scale).
- **Revised Length:** 11,098.8 km (as of Dec 2024).
- **States Involved:** 11 coastal States + 2 UTs (Andaman & Nicobar, Lakshadweep).
- **Key Feature:** Longest coastline among Indian states — **Gujarat (~1,600 km)**.
- **No New Land Added:** No change in national borders or geological expansion.

Measurement Methodology:

- **Agencies Involved:** National Hydrographic Office (NHO) and Survey of India.
- **Technology Used:**
 - **Scale:** 1:250,000 electronic navigation charts.
 - **Tools:** GIS, LIDAR-GPS mapping, drone imaging, satellite altimetry.
- **Reference Line:** Highwater line from 2011 data, closing river mouths at standard inland points.
- **Mapped Features:** Tidal creeks, estuaries, sandbars, low-tide islands.

Implications for India:

1. **Maritime Security:**
 - Longer coastline means **more area to surveillance and protects** (e.g. post-26/11 coastal radar grid).
 - Coastal policing and Navy deployment need reevaluation.
2. **Disaster Management:**
 - Critical for **cyclone, tsunami, and sea-level rise preparedness** (e.g., Odisha's early warning systems).
 - Enhances accuracy in **coastal zone regulation (CRZ) mapping**.
3. **Economic Zoning:**
 - Impacts **EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone)** calculation and fishing rights allocation.
 - Coastal States like **Tamil Nadu and Kerala** can gain **blue economy leverage**.
4. **Infrastructure Planning:**
 - Better data for **ports, shipping lanes, and coastal tourism** (e.g., Sagarmala project).

Significance of Increasing Coastline:

- **Reflects scientific progress:** Not territorial gain, but enhanced precision through modern cartography.
- **Strengthens policy decisions:** Data-backed planning for coastal development, biodiversity protection, and climate resilience.
- **Reinforces India’s maritime identity:** Supports India’s goal of becoming a Blue Economy leader.

Conclusion:

The revised coastline is the outcome of advanced geospatial technologies, not any physical expansion of land. It strengthens India’s capacity to safeguard, develop, and sustainably manage its coastal regions. This shift highlights how scientific progress—rather than natural changes—can redefine our understanding of geography.

PYQ:

Comment on the resource potentials of the long coastline of India and highlight the status of natural hazard preparedness in these areas. (UPSC-2023)

EARLY ARRIVAL OF MONSOON

Context:

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) declared the onset of the southwest monsoon over Kerala on May 24, 2025, eight days ahead of the usual June 1 date.

- This marks one of the earliest monsoon arrivals in over a decade, last seen in 2009.

About Early Arrival of Monsoon:

What is the Southwest Monsoon?

- The **Southwest Monsoon** is a seasonal wind system that brings **over 70% of India’s annual rainfall** during June–September.
- It plays a critical role in **agriculture, water availability**, and overall economic activity.

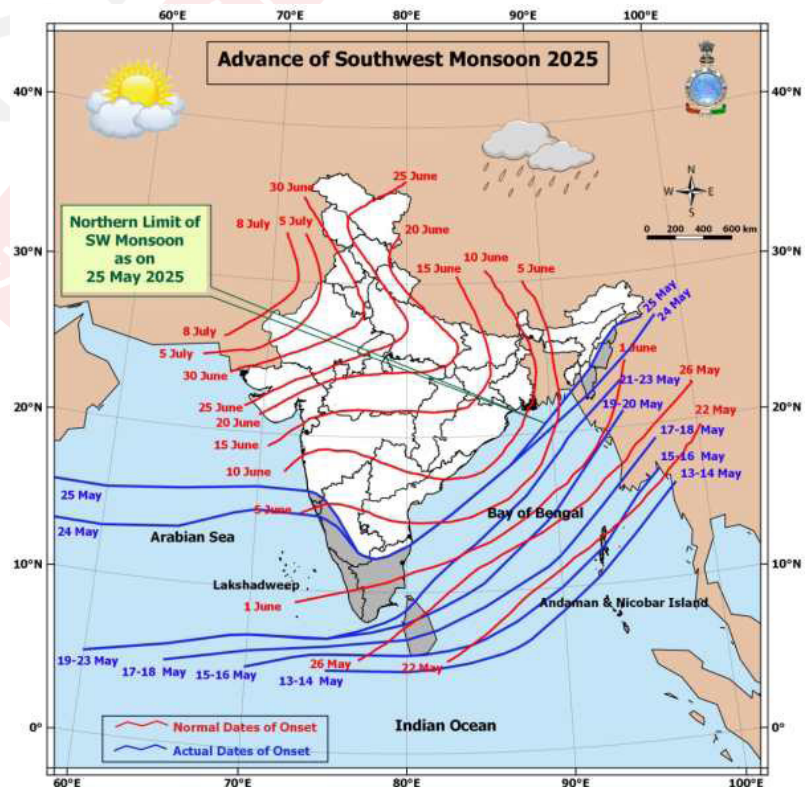
When is Monsoon Onset Declared?

The IMD uses **three main criteria** to confirm the monsoon’s onset over Kerala:

1. **Rainfall Trigger:** 60% of 14 designated stations must record ≥ 2.5 mm rainfall for two consecutive days.
2. **Wind Field Criteria:** Westerlies should extend up to **600 hPa** (hectoPascals) level with wind speeds of 15–20 knots at 925 hPa.
3. **Outgoing Longwave Radiation (OLR):** OLR must be **below 200 W/m²**, indicating active convection and cloud cover.

Factors Behind Early Monsoon Onset 2025:

- **Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO):** Enhanced eastward-moving tropical disturbance boosted convection and rainfall over the Indian Ocean. E.g. MJO impact observed from May 13 over the south Andaman Sea (IMD).
- **Mascarene High Intensification:** Strong high-pressure system over the southern Indian Ocean aided in directing moist winds to Indian coastlines.
- **Convection Surge:** Rising heat and moisture movements increased vertical cloud build-up, bringing early rains.
- **Somali Jet Strengthening:** Cross-equatorial winds became stronger, accelerating the arrival of monsoon currents over Kerala and Karnataka.



- **Heat Low Formation:** Persistent low pressure over **Pakistan and NW India** created suction for moist monsoonal air.
- **Monsoon Trough Activation:** Elongated low-pressure zone stretching from Arabian Sea to Bay of Bengal activated rainfall over central India and NE India.

Consequences of Early Monsoon Onset

- **Agriculture Boost:** Early sowing of **Kharif crops** such as paddy and pulses can begin, improving crop calendar adherence.
- **Reservoir Recharge:** Helps early water level replenishment in **drought-prone states** like Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.
- **Urban Flooding Risk:** Cities unprepared for early rain, e.g., **Bengaluru**, may see increased urban flooding.
- **Altered Weather Patterns:** Early monsoon may disrupt normal temperature patterns, seen in cooler summer 2025 trends across south India.
- **Forecast Challenges:** Early onset may or may not ensure a **longer or stronger** monsoon season, posing risks for water management planning.

Conclusion:

The **early onset of the 2025 monsoon** is the result of favourable atmospheric and oceanic conditions including MJO and Somali Jet dynamics. While it brings hope for agriculture and water security, it also demands **preparedness** against urban flooding and misaligned rainfall patterns.

PYQ:

Why is the South-West Monsoon called ‘Purvaiya’ (easterly) in the Bhojpur region? How has this directional seasonal wind system influenced the cultural ethos of the region? (10 M)

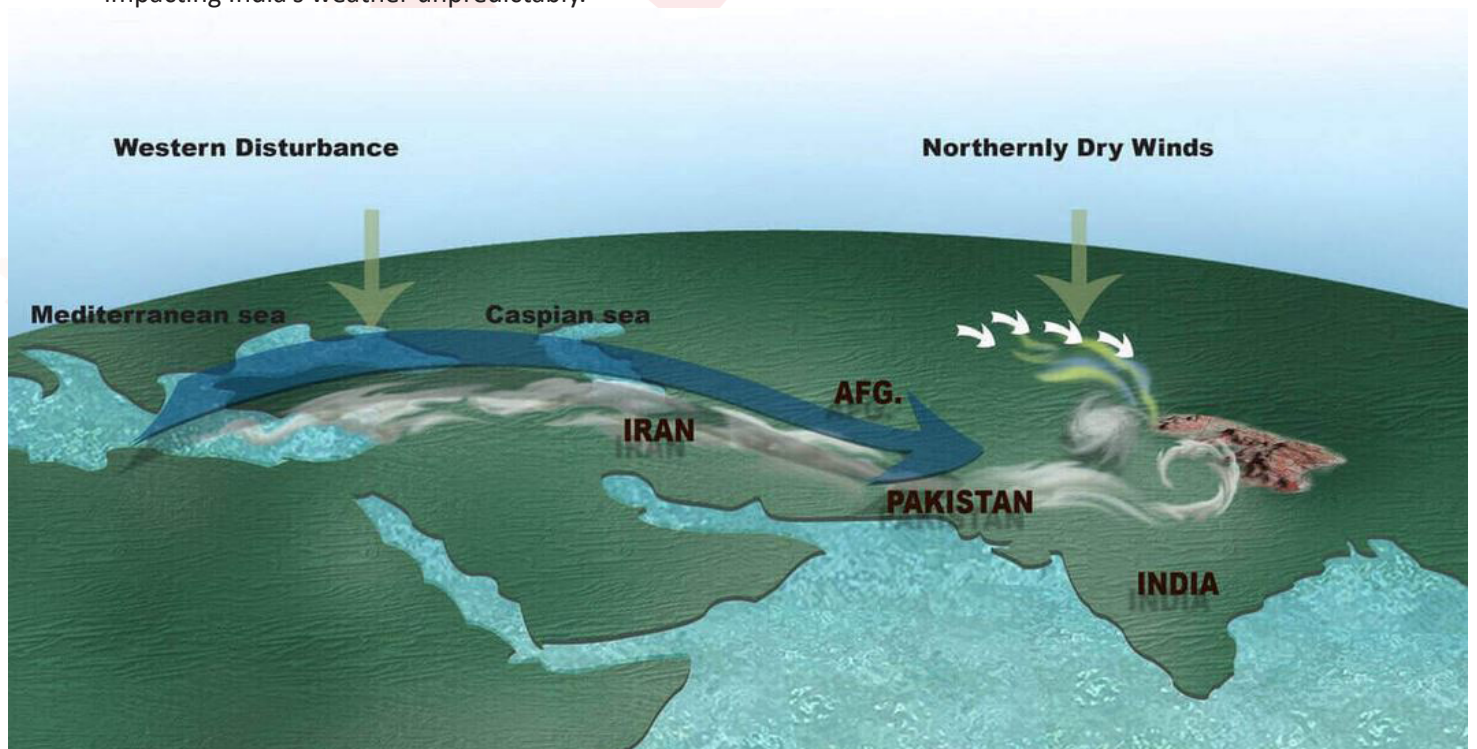
[Syllabus: World Physical Geography & Resources](#)

WESTERN DISTURBANCE

Context:

A strong Western Disturbance triggered heavy rainfall and storms across Delhi, North and South India, causing floods, hail, and airport disruption.

- Recent studies show **climate change is altering the frequency, intensity, and seasonality** of Western Disturbances, impacting India’s weather unpredictably.



About Western Disturbance:

- **What it is?**
 - Western Disturbances (WDs) are **eastward-moving extra-tropical cyclones** that bring rain and snow to northern India, particularly in winter.
 - They originate over the **Mediterranean, Caspian, and Black Seas**, picking up moisture before reaching the Indian subcontinent.
- **How it forms?**
 - WDs form due to **interactions between polar and tropical air masses** and travel along the **subtropical westerly jet stream** over the Himalayas.
 - These systems are embedded in high-altitude winds and often accompanied by low-pressure areas.

Impact of Western Disturbances on India:

- **Winter Rainfall & Snow:** Primary source of winter precipitation in **North India**, crucial for **Rabi crops** in Punjab, Haryana, and western UP.
- **Moderates Heatwaves:** Frequent WDs reduce **summer heat intensity** across northwest and central India.
- **Triggers Extreme Weather:** Causes **hailstorms, flash floods, and landslides**, especially in **Himalayan states** like J&K and Himachal.
- **Affects Aviation & Transport:** Leads to **flight delays, road blockages, and urban flooding**, especially in metro cities like Delhi.
- **Alters Monsoon Behaviour:** Overlapping WDs during **pre-monsoon and monsoon months** disrupt rainfall patterns and intensify precipitation.

Recent Climate Change Impact on Western Disturbances:

- **Increased Frequency:** More WDs observed post-January 2025, especially in March–April.
- **Extended Seasonality:** WDs now occur in May–July, beyond their usual Dec–March peak. **E.g.** Weather and Climate Dynamics journal (2024) confirms this 70-year shift.
- **Stronger Jet Streams:** Climate change has **intensified subtropical westerly jet streams**, allowing WDs to travel wider and deeper. **E.g.** This causes more **meridional oscillations**, leading to erratic rain and snowfall.
- **Moisture Surge from Arabian Sea:** Rapid warming (1.2°C–1.4°C rise in SST) increases moisture availability. **E.g.** Heavier rainfall and flash floods across North and Central India.
- **Increased Extremes:** In 2025, WDs caused **hailstorms in Bihar, Himachal, Vidarbha**, and flooding in Telangana and Delhi, as per IMD warnings.

Way Ahead:

- **Enhance Weather Forecasting:** Strengthen satellite monitoring, radar coverage, and AI-based forecasting to track WDs more precisely.
- **Urban Flood Preparedness:** Cities like Delhi need WD-specific urban drainage and early warning systems to manage waterlogging and transport disruptions.
- **Climate-Adaptive Agriculture:** Modify sowing patterns and crop insurance schemes based on WD forecasts to protect Rabi crops.
- **Research & Modeling:** Boost interdisciplinary climate modeling of WD behaviour and integrate findings into India's climate adaptation policies.
- **Collaborative Climate Action:** Engage with **Hindu Kush-Himalayan regional partners** to address transboundary weather impacts of changing WDs.

Conclusion:

Western Disturbances are no longer seasonal visitors but year-round disruptors, reshaped by global warming. They now affect monsoon overlaps, cause extreme events, and challenge weather predictability in India. A climate-resilient policy framework, backed by science and inter-state coordination, is essential to mitigate future WD-linked disasters.

PYQ:

Discuss the concept of air mass and explain its role in macro-climatic changes. (UPSC 2016)

FACT FOR PRELIMS (FFP):

Syllabus: Indian Culture-Salient aspects of Art Forms

SATAVAHANA DYNASTY

Context:

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) discovered 11 Satavahana-era inscriptions in the Gundaram Forest of Telangana’s Peddapalli district.

- Among them, two inscriptions reveal links to the **Chutu dynasty and Satavahana prince Kumara Hakusiri**, highlighting early Brahmi script and religious-political symbolism.

About Satavahana Dynasty:

- **Founded by:** *Simuka*, post-Mauryan period (mid-1st century BCE).
- **Etymology:** “Satavahana” in Prakrit means “driven by seven” (symbolic of the Sun God’s chariot).

CHUTU (CUTU) DYNASTY:

- **Time Period:** Circa 200–300 CE
- **Region Ruled:** Kuntala Rajya (modern-day Karnataka)
- **Capital:** Banavasi
- **Political Status:** Subordinate to Satavahanas and some scholars consider them independent due to use of royal title “Rājño” on coins.
- **Notable Kings:** Cuṭukulānanda, Sātakarṇi I & II, Muḍānanda, Śivalānanda
- The dynasty was eventually absorbed by the Kadambas.
- Despite rich archaeological evidence, historical details remain scarce.



- **Core regions:** Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Maharashtra.
- **Capitals:** Pratishthana (Paithan) and Amaravati.

Key Rulers:

- **Simuka: Founder**, built *Jain and Buddhist temples*.
- **Satakarni I (70–60 BCE):** Conquered *Kalinga*, performed *Ashvamedha*, and took the title **Dakshinapathapati**.
- **Hala:** Authored *Gatha Saptashati*, a collection of 700 Prakrit love poems.
- **Gautamiputra Satakarni (106–130 CE):**
 - Greatest king; **defeated Shakas and Nahapana**.
 - Described as *Ekabrahmana* and “destroyer of Kshatriya pride”.
 - Expanded from *Krishna River to Malwa*.
- **Yajna Sri Satakarni (165–194 CE):** Promoted *trade and maritime navigation*; coins feature **ship motifs**.

Administrative Framework:

- **Senapati as Provincial Governor:** Military chiefs were appointed as governors to control semi-Brahmanised tribal regions, blending civil and military administration.
- **Feudatory System:** The empire had a three-tier system—*Raja* (independent coinage), *Mahabhoja*, and *Senapati*—ensuring localized governance.
- **Tax-free Land Grants:** Satavahanas granted tax-exempt lands to Brahmins and Buddhist monks, promoting religion and education.

Economic Contributions:

- **Agriculture:** The Krishna-Godavari delta was a fertile rice-producing zone, sustaining the empire’s agrarian base.
- **Mining & Trade:** Rich in minerals like iron (Warangal) and gold (Kolar), the region thrived through inland and maritime trade routes.
- **Coinage:** They were the first native rulers to issue portrait coins with legends in Prakrit and regional symbols.

Cultural and Religious Legacy:

- **Architecture:** Rock-cut temples like *Karle Chaitya* and stupas at *Amaravati* and *Nagarjunakonda* showcased a blend of art and devotion.
- **Language:** *Prakrit* was the administrative language, inscribed using *Brahmi script*, ensuring wider reach among common people.

SACRED RELICS OF LORD BUDDHA

Context:

The Sacred Relics of Lord Buddha arrived in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, ahead of UN Vesak Day 2025.



About Sacred Relics of Lord Buddha

What Are Sacred Relics?

- Sacred Relics of Lord Buddha are revered physical remains or personal items associated with **Gautama Buddha**, preserved and venerated by followers across the world.
 - They symbolize **Buddha's teachings**, spiritual enlightenment, and serve as focal points of devotion and pilgrimage.
 - They are preserved and curated by the **National Museum of India**.
 - Supported by the **Ministry of Culture** and **International Buddhist Confederation (IBC)**.

Types of Relics Associated with Buddha

- **Saririka Relics:** Physical remains such as bones, teeth, and ashes.
- **Paribhogika Relics:** Objects used by Buddha such as his robe, bowl, or walking stick.
- **Uddesika Relics:** Symbols representing Buddha like stupas, images, and sculptures.

Major Relics Associated with Buddha

1. **Mahabodhi Temple (Bodh Gaya)** – Site of Buddha's enlightenment.
2. **Kapilavastu Relics** – Discovered in Piprahwa (UP), linked to Buddha's Shakya clan.
3. **Tooth Relic (Sri Lanka)** – Housed in **Kandy's Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic**.
4. **Sarnath Relics** – Where Buddha gave his first sermon (Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta).

Significance of the Relics

- **Symbolize Buddha's teachings** of peace, non-violence, and enlightenment.
- **Promote cultural diplomacy**—India has shared relics with **Mongolia, Thailand, and now Vietnam**.
- **Strengthen Buddhist heritage ties** between nations.

PIPAHWA RELICS

Context:

India has issued a legal notice to **Sotheby's auction house and the Peppé family**, demanding the **immediate halt of an auction** of ancient relics from **Piprahwa Stupa**, believed to be linked to **Lord Buddha's cremated remains**.

About Piprahwa Relics:

- **What are Piprahwa Relics?**
 - The **Piprahwa relics** comprise:
 - **Bone fragments** believed to be those of Lord Buddha
 - **Crystal and soapstone caskets, a sandstone coffer**

- **Adornments like gold ornaments, pearls, rubies, topaz, and sapphires**
 - Excavated in **1898** by **William Claxton Peppé** in **Piprahwa**, Siddharthnagar district, Uttar Pradesh, near the Nepal border.
 - The Site was identified as part of **ancient Kapilavastu**, capital of the **Shakya republic**, the clan of **Prince Siddhartha (Buddha)**.
- **Historical Significance:**
 - Peppé unearthed what is believed to be **one of the original eight stupas** containing Buddha's remains after his cremation (~480 BCE).
 - The **Sakya clan**, Buddha's kin, are believed to have constructed the stupa to enshrine his relics.
 - The relics are **spiritually revered** by Buddhists globally and considered **intangible religious heritage**.
- **Legal and Ethical Dispute:**
 - Under the **Indian Treasure Trove Act, 1878**, most relics went to the **Indian Museum, Kolkata**.
 - However, **1/5th of the find**, considered duplicates, was retained by Peppé's family—these are now being auctioned.
- **Reasons behind India's objection:**
 - India argues the relics are **sacred and inalienable cultural property**.
 - The sale **violates international norms**, including:
 - UNESCO Conventions on Cultural Property
 - UNIDROIT Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects.
 - Buddhist scholars and institutions worldwide object, saying **commodifying sacred objects is unethical**.



ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

Context:

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) plans to expand its Underwater Archaeology Wing (UAW) after its revival, to explore submerged cultural sites in states like Maharashtra.



About Archaeological Survey of India (ASI):

- **What it is?**
 - ASI is the **premier government agency** responsible for archaeological research, protection, preservation, and conservation of India's cultural heritage.
- **Founded:** 1861 by **Alexander Cunningham** under Lord Canning's statute.
- **Revived:** As a separate department in 1871, with Cunningham as the **first Director-General**.
- **Headquarters:** Located at **24, Tilak Marg, New Delhi, India**.
- **Parent Ministry:** Operates under the **Ministry of Culture, Government of India**.
- **ASI Logo:** The logo is inspired by the **Sanchi Stupa**, symbolizing India's ancient architectural and archaeological legacy.
- **Aims & Objectives:**
 - To **protect and conserve ancient monuments** and archaeological sites of national importance.
 - To **excavate and document** historically significant locations, including terrestrial and now **underwater sites**.
- **Core Functions:**
 - **Survey & Excavation:** Carries out scientific excavation and exploration of archaeological remains.
 - **Conservation:** Maintains and restores over **3,600+ monuments** notified under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological

- Sites and Remains Act, 1958.
- **Research & Publication:** Publishes excavation reports, conservation manuals, and journals such as *Indian Archaeology – A Review*.
- **Underwater Archaeology:** Through the **Underwater Archaeology Wing (UAW)**, it explores submerged heritage along coastlines and inland water bodies.
- **Collaboration:** Partners with state departments, Indian Navy, IITs, and international bodies for advanced archaeological research.

VIKRAMADITYA I OF BADAMI CHALUKYAS

Context:

A rare 7th-century Old Kannada inscription from the reign of Vikramaditya I of Badami Chalukyas has been unearthed at Madapura Lake in Davangere, Karnataka.

- It offering insights into taxation, land donation, and regional administration during his rule.



About Badami Chalukyas:

- Originated as a local Kannada power, and claimed descent from Ayodhya for legitimacy.
- **Capital:** Vatapi (Modern Badami) in Karnataka.
- **Political History:**
 - **Pulakesin I (543–566 CE):** Founded the dynasty and fortified Badami.
 - **Pulakesin II (609–642 CE):** Greatest ruler and defeated Harshavardhana at Narmada.
 - Sent envoys to Persia and received a mission back, depicted in Ajanta caves.
 - **Vikramaditya I (644–681 CE):** Reclaimed Badami from Pallavas and expanded rule over Cholas, Pandyas, and Keralas.
- **Contribution to Administration:**
 - Centralised monarchy with limited village

- autonomy.
- Plateau kingdom—land revenue was limited and relied on military expansion.
- Maintained a maritime fleet, and Pulakesin II had 100 ships.
- **Religious Contributions:**
 - Supported Shaivism, Vaishnavism, Shaktism, and Jainism.
 - Vikramaditya and others donated to Jain establishments and Pulakesin I performed Ashvamedha Yajna.
- **Art and Architecture:**
 - Introduced **Vesara style**, blending Nagara and Dravida elements.
 - Built rock-cut and structural temples at Aihole, Badami, Pattadakal.

About Vikramaditya I:

- Vikramaditya I was the son of **Pulakesin II**, the most illustrious Chalukya king.
- He ascended the throne after a **political crisis and Pallava invasion** post his father’s death.
- Known for **reclaiming Vatapi (Badami)** from the Pallavas and **restoring the Chalukya kingdom**.

Contributions to Chalukya Dynasty:

- **Military Achievements:**
 - Defeated **Narasimhavarman I of the Pallavas** who had earlier captured Badami.
 - His military campaigns **reunified the fractured Chalukya empire** and restored lost prestige.
 - Subdued southern powers like **Cholas, Pandyas, and Keralas** – strengthening southern Deccan control.
- **Political Consolidation:**
 - Revived **centralised authority** and re-established administrative control over Karnataka and adjoining areas.
 - Appointed loyal feudatories like **Singhavenna** (as per recent Davangere inscription) to govern local regions.
- **Legacy:**
 - Known as **“Rajamalla”** and **“Yuddhamalla”** (Warrior among kings).
 - His reign marked a **turning point in reviving Chalukya power** after earlier defeats.
 - Set the stage for the architectural and cultural flourishing seen during the reign of **Vikramaditya II** and **Kirtivarman II**.

leftover sacred wood from Puri’s Nabakalebara ritual for idol-making.



About Nabakalebara Ritual:

- **What is Nabakalebara?**
 - **Nabakalebara** (meaning “new body”) is a sacred ritual associated with **Lord Jagannath’s idols** in Puri, Odisha.
 - It involves the **replacement of wooden idols** of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra, Subhadra, and Sudarshana with new ones.
 - Conducted every **12 or 19 years**, based on the lunar calendar (when two **Asadha months** occur in a year).
- **Key Features & Significance:**
 - **Astrological Basis:** Timing depends on the extra **Adhimasa (leap month)** in the Hindu calendar.
 - **Sacred Wood (Daru):**
 - Four specific **neem trees** are selected based on divine signs.
 - Logs must have certain marks (e.g., conch, disc, etc.) to be deemed suitable.
 - **Ritual Process:**
 - **Banajaga Yatra:** Search for holy trees by Daitapati servitors.
 - **Log Transportation:** Logs brought to Puri via ceremonial procession.
 - **Idol Carving:** Done secretly by **Biswakarma** artisans.
 - **Brahma Transfer:** The divine essence (**Brahma Padartha**) is transferred from old to new idols in a midnight ritual.
 - **Burial of Old Idols:** Deities are buried in **Koili Baikuntha** (temple premises).
- **Cultural Importance:**
 - Symbolizes **rebirth and cyclical time** in Hindu philosophy.
 - Draws millions of devotees during **Nabakalebara Rath Yatra**.

NABAKALEBARA RITUAL

Context: The recent inauguration of the Digha Jagannath Temple in West Bengal has sparked controversy over its designation as “Jagannath Dham” and allegations of using

- **Controversy in Digha Temple:**
 - Allegations suggest leftover wood from **2015 Nabakalebara** was used for Digha’s idols, violating rituals.
 - Odisha’s government has ordered a probe into the matter.

- **Swasthasya Swasthya Rakshanam:** Preserving the health of the healthy.
- **Aturasya Vikara Prashamanam:** Curing the illness of the sick.
- Emphasis on **balance between body, mind, spirit,** and environment.
- Healing through **natural herbs, diet, lifestyle, and therapies.**

AYURVEDA DAY

Context:

The Government of India has officially declared **23rd September** as **Ayurveda Day** through a Gazette notification.

About Ayurveda Day:

What it is:

Ayurveda Day is a national observance to **honour India’s ancient system of medicine** and promote it as a **scientific and holistic health tradition.**



New Celebration Date:

From 2025 onwards, **23rd September** will be observed annually as **Ayurveda Day**, coinciding with the **autumnal equinox**, a day symbolising balance — core to Ayurvedic philosophy.

Aim:

- To **create awareness** about Ayurveda as a **preventive and sustainable healthcare system.**
- To embed Ayurveda in **global health dialogues** as a science-based wellness approach.
- To enable better **planning and participation** through a fixed calendar date.

About Ayurveda:

- **What it is:**
 - Ayurveda is an **ancient Indian system of medicine** rooted in the **Vedas**, particularly the **Atharva Veda**, dating back over **5000 years**. The term is derived from “*Ayu*” (*life*) and “*Veda*” (*knowledge*) — meaning “**Science of Life**”.
- **Core Principles:**

Features of Ayurveda:

- Focus on **preventive care** over reactive treatments.
- Promotes **mind-body harmony** and seasonal routines.
- Uses **herbal medicines**, detox therapies, yoga, and meditation.
- Applies a **customised health approach** based on individual constitution (*Prakriti*).

KEEZHADI EXCAVATION



Context:

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has asked archaeologist Amarnath Ramakrishna to resubmit the Keezhadi excavation report with revisions, citing the need for scientific accuracy and better period classification.

About Keezhadi Excavation:

- **What Is Keezhadi?**
 - Keezhadi is an **archaeological site** near **Madurai, Tamil Nadu**, along the **Vaigai river basin**, explored by ASI and later by the Tamil Nadu State Archaeology Department.
- **Discovered In:** Initial excavations began in **2015**, following surveys conducted across **293 sites** in the Vaigai valley during 2013–14.
- **Location:**
 - **Excavation site:** Pallichanthai Thidal, Sivaganga district.
 - Excavated area: Only **1 out of 100 acres**, yet over **4,000 artefacts** have been unearthed.
- **Key Findings**
 - **Carbon dating** (AMS) of charcoal shows urban habitation existed by **200 BCE**.
 - Discovery of **urban features:** brick

structures, ring wells, pottery, graffiti, beads, and water storage facilities.

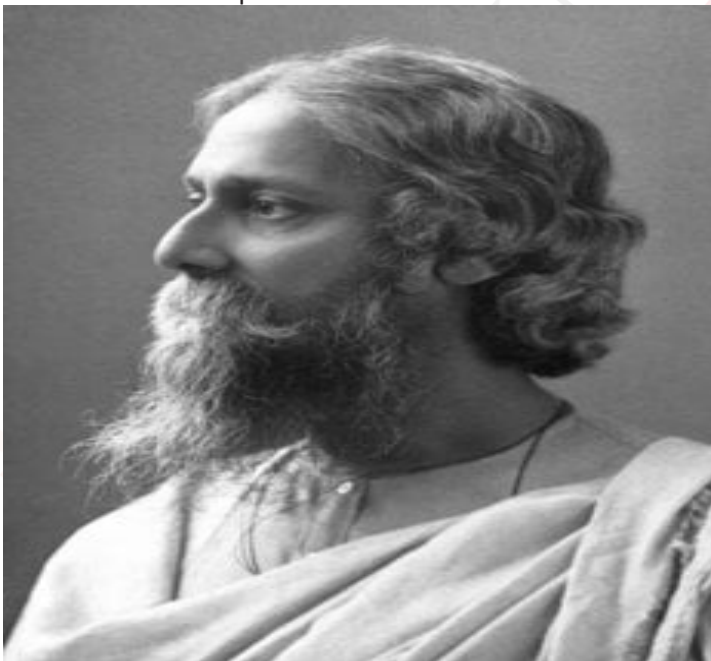
- **Artefacts** suggest links with **North India and Western trade networks** during the **Sangam Age**.
- A large, **decorative pot**, unique to Tamil excavations, was also unearthed—highlighting artistic and cultural advancement.
- **Cultural Significance:**
 - Supports theories of a **pre-Sangam urban Tamil civilisation**.
 - Mention of settlements like **Manalur** and **Konthagai** in **Tiruvilayadal Puranam** links the site to classical Tamil texts.
 - Establishes **Keezhadi** as a centre of literacy, trade, and craftsmanship, challenging North-centric civilisational narratives.

[Syllabus: Modern Indian History](#)

GURUDEV RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Context:

Prime Minister of India paid tribute to Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore on his birth anniversary (Tagore Jayanti), lauding his impact on India’s cultural, literary, and educational landscape.



About Rabindranath Tagore:

- **Birth and Background:**
 - Born on **7 May 1861** in Kolkata (then Calcutta), Bengal Presidency.
 - Son of **Debendranath Tagore**, a prominent Brahmo Samaj reformer.
 - Grew up in a culturally rich household that

inspired his literary journey.

- **Education:**
 - Educated at home with strong emphasis on Sanskrit, English, and Upanishadic texts.
 - Sent to England at age 17 but did not complete formal education.
 - Advocated **holistic education**, later founding **Santiniketan** to promote integrated learning.
- **Contribution to India’s Freedom Movement:**
 - Supported the **Swadeshi Movement** through writings and songs.
 - Opposed British repressive policies and renounced his **Knighthood in 1919** after the **Jallianwala Bagh massacre**.
 - Maintained ideological differences with Mahatma Gandhi, yet deeply respected him.
- **Contribution to Literature:**
 - Authored over **50 volumes of poetry**, 12 novels, numerous plays, short stories, and essays.
 - Key works include:
 - *Gitanjali* (Nobel Prize, 1913)
 - *Gora*, *Ghare Baire*, *The Post Office*, *Raktakaravi*
 - Composed **over 2,000 songs**, including **India’s national anthem, Jana Gana Mana**.
- **Global Recognition:**
 - First non-European **Nobel Laureate in Literature (1913)**.
 - Built bridges of understanding with literary figures like W.B. Yeats and Romain Rolland.
- **Philosophy and Vision:**
 - Promoted **Universal Humanism**, blending Eastern spiritual values with Western liberalism.
 - Advocated for **harmony between man and nature, freedom in education, and dignity of individuals**.
 - Believed in **anti-dogmatic spirituality** rooted in the Upanishads.

BIJU PATNAIK & BATTLE OF STALINGRAD

Context:

Russia honoured Biju Patnaik with a memorial plaque at its embassy in New Delhi for his crucial role during the Battle of Stalingrad (1942–43).



About Biju Patnaik:

- **Early Life and Profession:**
 - Born in **Cuttack (1916)**, Biju Patnaik was a renowned **freedom fighter, aviator, and politician**.
 - Joined the **Royal Indian Air Force in 1936** as a transport and rescue pilot.
- **Contribution to Russia in WWII:**
 - Flew **supply missions** during the **Battle of Stalingrad**, aiding the **besieged Soviet Red Army**.
 - Risked German air defences to deliver **essential arms and supplies** under extreme combat conditions.
- **Role in India's Freedom Movement:**
 - Supported the **Quit India Movement** by flying secret missions for nationalist leaders.
 - Helped rescue freedom fighters from Burma and facilitated **Indonesia's fight for independence**, for which he was honoured by Indonesia as well.

About Battle of Stalingrad (1942–1943)

- **Overview:**
 - A major **World War II battle** fought between **Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union** in **Stalingrad (now Volgograd)** from July 17, 1942 to February 2, 1943.
- **Strategic Aims:** Hitler sought control of **Stalingrad** to secure **oil-rich Caucasus**, cut off Soviet logistics via the **Volga River**, and win a symbolic victory by capturing the city named after **Josef Stalin**.
- **Key Features:**
 - Urban warfare at its bloodiest: **House-to-house combat**, massive civilian casualties, and near-total destruction of the city.
 - German forces controlled **90% of the city** by late 1942.
 - Soviet **Operation Uranus** in November encircled 300,000 Axis troops, cutting them

off from supplies.

- **Outcome and Significance:**
 - **Soviet victory** marked a **turning point in WWII**; German forces began retreating thereafter.
 - Nearly **100,000 German soldiers** captured, including **Gen. Friedrich Paulus**.
 - The battle bolstered Soviet morale and **marked the beginning of the Nazi collapse** on the Eastern Front.

50TH ANNIVERSARY OF SIKKIM

Context:

Prime Minister of India greeted the people of Sikkim on the 50th anniversary of its statehood. This milestone commemorates the peaceful integration of the Himalayan kingdom into the Union of India in 1975.

About Sikkim:

- **Location:** Part of Northeastern India and shares international borders with Nepal (west), Bhutan (east), China (north), and Indian state West Bengal (south).
- **Capital:** **Gangtok**, known for its fusion of **Tibetan Buddhist culture** and modernity.
- **Statehood:** Became the **22nd state of India** through the **36th Constitutional Amendment** in 1975.



- **Historical Background:**
 - Originally ruled by the **Namgyal dynasty (Chogyals)** from **1642–1975**.
 - Became a **British protectorate** in 1861 under the Treaty of Tumlong.
 - Post-independence, remained an **Indian protectorate** through the 1950 Indo-Sikkim Treaty.
 - Merged with India following a **1975 referendum**, where over 97% voted for abolishing monarchy and joining India.
- **Key Features of Sikkim:**
 - **First 100% Organic State** in India —

- pioneered sustainable agriculture.
- **Ecological Richness:** Part of the **Eastern Himalayas biodiversity hotspot**, home to species like the **red panda** and **Himalayan blue poppy**.
- **Cultural Diversity:** Home to **Lepchas, Bhutias, and Nepalis**; preserves vibrant Buddhist traditions.
- **Strategic Importance:** Acts as a **buffer state** between India and China; region of historical and geopolitical significance, especially near **Doklam**.
- **Tourism & Development:** Focus on **eco-tourism, clean energy, and heritage preservation**.

[Syllabus: Salient features of Indian Society](#)

DONGRIA KONDH TRIBE

Context:

The Dongria Kondh tribe of Odisha was recently featured for showcasing their vibrant identity and cultural resilience during a festival near the Niyamgiri Hills.



About Dongria Kondh Tribe:

- **Who They Are?**
 - The **Dongria Kondh** are an indigenous tribal community, classified as a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)**.
 - They are renowned for their **environmental stewardship** and successful resistance against bauxite mining in the Niyamgiri hills.
- **Habitat:**
 - Reside in **scattered hamlets** within the **Niyamgiri hill range**, spread across **Rayagada and Kalahandi districts** in southwestern Odisha.

- These hills are ecologically rich and spiritually sacred to the tribe, home to their revered deity, **Niyam Raja**.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Language and Script:**
 - Speak **Kui**, an oral **Dravidian language** closely related to Gondi.
 - Kui does **not have a written script**, though it is sometimes transcribed in the **Odia script**.
 - **Physical and Cultural Traits:**
 - Known for their **distinctive dress and adornment:**
 - ✓ Women wear minimal clothing, metallic nose pins, tattoos, and long rows of earrings.
 - ✓ Men wear colourful turbans and loincloths with traditional body tattoos.
 - Use traditional knowledge to practise **podu (shifting) cultivation**, growing millets, turmeric, pineapples, and other crops.
 - **Social and Religious Life:**
 - Follow **animism, ancestor worship, and nature-centric spiritual beliefs**.
 - The tribe includes **sub-groups** like Kovi, Kuttia, Languli, Penga, and Jharnia.
 - Uphold traditions through **oral storytelling, song, dance, and community rituals**.

JENU KURUBA TRIBE

Context:

Tension erupted in Nagarhole Reserve, Karnataka, as 52 evicted Jenu Kuruba tribal families attempted to reclaim ancestral forest land under the Forest Rights Act, 2006.



About Jenu Kuruba Tribe:

Origin:

- The **Jenu Kuruba** (meaning “honey collectors” in Kannada) are a forest-dwelling **PVTG** primarily in

Kodagu and Mysuru districts of Karnataka.

- They are also known as **Then Kurumba** or **Kattu Naikar**, living in small forest hamlets called **Hadi**.

Habitat Status:

- Found across the forest belts of **Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu**.
- Recognized as a **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Group (PVTG)** under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

Features of the Jenu Kuruba Tribe:

- **Livelihood:**
 - Traditional livelihood includes **honey collection, tuber gathering**, and minor forest produce harvesting.
 - Post-eviction, many work as **plantation labourers**, often in coffee estates, facing deep poverty and poor access to services.
- **Social Life:**
 - Semi-nomadic with a **decentralised community structure** led by a **headman (Yajamana)** and **ritual chief (Gudda)**.
 - Their **decision-making is localised**, independent of external religious or political authorities.
- **Culture & Belief System:**
 - **Rich oral traditions:** songs, dances, and myths revolving around nature, marriage, and rituals.
 - Deep reverence for **sylvan deities**, nature spirits, and ancestral forces—distinct from mainstream Hinduism.
 - Religion includes practices rooted in **animism** with **Hindu overlays** in festivals like Holi, Diwali, and Navratri.

About Kandha Tribe:

- **Who are the Kandha?**
 - Kandha (or Khond) is the largest tribal community in Odisha, mainly residing in **Kandhamal, Rayagada, Kalahandi, and Koraput districts**.
 - They speak **Kui** or **Kuvi** — both Dravidian languages.
 - The term “Kandha” is derived from Telugu “Konda” meaning **hill**, denoting their origins as forest dwellers.
- **Sub-Groups:** Include Desia Kandha, Dongria Kandha, Kutia Kandha (the latter two classified as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups - PVTGs).

About Facial Tattoo Tradition among Kandha Women:

- **Origin and Purpose:**
 - **Began as a protective practice:** Women tattooed their faces with dark, geometric patterns to appear unattractive and avoid **sexual exploitation** by local landlords and colonial forces.
 - It later evolved into a **cultural identity marker** — tattoos became essential for marital eligibility and community acceptance.
- **Painful Ritual:**
 - Girls, usually around **10 years old**, endured hours of facial piercing with crude tools.
 - The painful process led to **severe swelling and infection**, lasting weeks.
 - **Silver ear-rings** were also worn to denote marital status.
- **Current Status:**
 - **Practically vanished among women under 40**, due to awareness campaigns and educational interventions since the 1990s.
 - The practice is no longer seen as necessary or relevant by younger generations.

KANDHA TRIBE

Context:

Kandha women in Odisha’s Kandhamal district are increasingly abandoning the centuries-old tradition of facial tattooing, once practiced as a form of protection against exploitation.



SHIRUI LILY FESTIVAL

Context:

The Shirui Lily Festival resumed in Manipur after a two-year hiatus due to ethnic conflict, marking the first major movement of Meiteis through Kuki-Zo regions amid tight security.



About Shirui Lily Festival:

- **What is the Shirui Lily Festival?**
 - **Organised by:** Manipur Tourism Department
 - **First Held:** 2017
 - **Venue:** Ukhrul district, home to the Tangkhul Naga tribe
 - **Occasion:** Coincides with the blooming season of the Shirui Lily in May
 - **Objective:** Promote eco-tourism and raise awareness about the endangered lily species
- **Key Features of the Festival:**
 - **Cultural Programs:** Traditional dances, music, and folk performances.
 - **Eco-Initiatives:** Trash collection drives and awareness campaigns.
 - **Competitions:** Cooking contests, beauty pageants, and sports events.
 - **Duration:** Held from **May 20 to May 25** annually during bloom season.

About Shirui Lily (*Lilium mackliniae*):

- **What is the Shirui Lily?**
- **Botanical Name:** *Lilium mackliniae*, named by botanist Frank Kingdon-Ward after his wife Jean Macklin
- **Local Name:** Kashong Timrawon
- **Found In:** Shirui Hills, Ukhrul District, Manipur at **2,673 m elevation**
- **Discovery:** Identified in **1946**, though locally known for centuries
- **Features & Significance:**
 - **Unique Habitat:** Endemic to a narrow altitudinal range in Shirui Hill range.
 - **Conservation Status:** Endangered due to habitat loss, climate change, and invasive species.
 - **Cultural Symbolism:** Protected by mythic deity Philava, spiritual and ecological emblem of the Tangkhul community.
 - **State Flower:** Recognised as the official **state flower of Manipur**.
 - **Scientific Efforts:** ICAR-NEH scientists led by Dr. Manas Sahoo undertook lab-to-land micropropagation to conserve the species.

About Tendu Leaves:



- **What are Tendu Leaves?**
 - **Tendu (*Diospyros melanoxylon*)**, often termed “**Green Gold**”, is a Non-Timber Forest Produce (NTFP) predominantly used for **wrapping beedis** (hand-rolled cigarettes).
- **Regional Growth:**
 - Found widely in **central India**, mainly in:
 - Madhya Pradesh (25% of India’s production)
 - Chhattisgarh (20%)
 - Odisha (15–20%)
 - Maharashtra (10%)
- **Key Features:**
 - Grows as a **shrub or small tree**, easily identifiable by its broad leaves.
 - A **standard bag** contains **1,000 bundles**, each with **50 leaves**.
 - Best quality tendu leaves are reported from **southern Chhattisgarh** (e.g., Dantewada, Sukma).
- **Uses and Applications:**
 - Primarily used in **beedi-making**, supporting the **rural tobacco economy**.
 - Generates **employment for tribal communities**, contributing over **100 million person-days annually** in collection and processing.
- **Challenges & Issues:**
 - **Smuggling:** Higher prices in Chhattisgarh (₹5,500/bag) vs. neighboring states fuel illegal trade.
 - **Exploitation:** Low wages (₹60/day) for collectors despite lucrative trade.
 - **Declining Demand:** Health concerns over smoking, rising taxes, and alternative products.

TENDU LEAVES

Context:

Chhattisgarh has raised concerns over tendu leaf smuggling from adjoining states due to its highest procurement price of ₹5,500 per standard bag, which has incentivized illegal trade during the peak collection season.

CHENAB RIVER

Context:

India has halted the flow of water from the Chenab River through the Baglihar Dam in Jammu and Kashmir following the suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty after the Pahalgam terror attacks.



About Chenab River:

- Formed by the **confluence of Chandra and Bhaga rivers** at Tandi in Lahaul & Spiti, Himachal Pradesh.
- Chandra originates near **Bara-lacha la Pass** (east), Bhaga from **Surya Taal lake** (west of the pass).
- Known as **Chandra-Bhaga** in upper reaches, it becomes **Chenab** downstream.
- Flows through **Himachal Pradesh** and **Jammu & Kashmir**, enters **Pakistan** in Punjab province, and joins **Sutlej River** to form **Panjnad River**.
- **Major Tributaries:**
 - **Right Bank:** Marusudar (largest tributary), Miyar Nalla, Bhut Nalla, Bichleri, Ans, and Kalnai
 - **Left Bank:** Niru, Tawi, Neeru, and Liddrari
 - **Major Hydroelectric Projects on Chenab River (Run-of-the-River Projects):** Baglihar Dam, Salal Dam, Dul Hasti, Ratle Project, Pakal Dul Dam, Kiru Project, and Kishtwar Project.
- **Historical Significance:**
 - Known since **Vedic period**, part of **Rigvedic Sapta Sindhu**.
 - Cited in accounts of **Alexander the Great's Indian campaign** (325 BCE).
 - Site of the historic **Battle of Chenab** between Sikhs and Afghans.

About Baglihar Dam:

- **Location:** Ramban district, Jammu & Kashmir, on the Chenab River.
- **Type:** Run-of-the-river hydroelectric project with limited storage capacity.
- **Installed Capacity:** Around 900 MW (in two

phases).

- **Commissioned By:** NHPC Limited, supported by Government of India.
- **Controversy:**
 - Opposed by Pakistan for alleged **treaty violations** under **Indus Waters Treaty (1960)**.
 - Subject to **World Bank arbitration**, which ruled in India's favour for certain technical modifications.

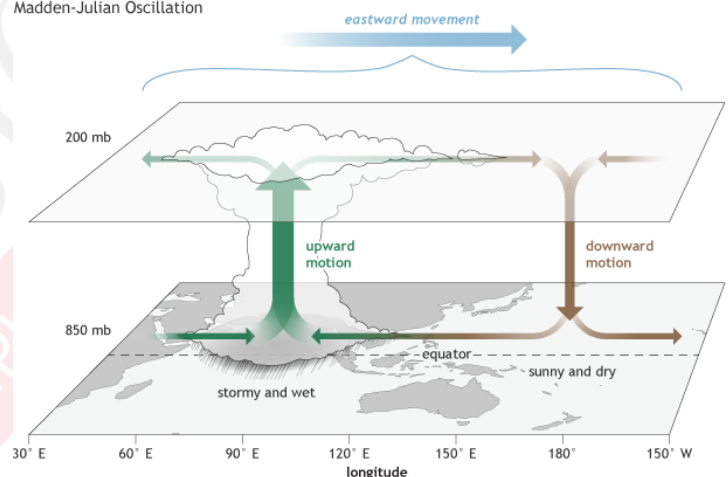
MADDEN-JULIAN OSCILLATION (MJO)

Context:

The Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO) played a key role in triggering the early onset of the southwest monsoon in Kerala and Mumbai.

About Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO):

Madden-Julian Oscillation



What is MJO?

The **MJO is an eastward-moving tropical atmospheric disturbance** involving clouds, rainfall, winds, and pressure patterns.

Discovered in **1971 by Roland Madden and Paul Julian**, it typically completes a global circuit every **30–60 days**.

It features two alternating phases:

Enhanced Convective Phase: Characterized by **increased rainfall** and **greater cloud formation** due to rising air and moisture convergence.

Suppressed Convective Phase: Marked by **reduced rainfall** and **clearer skies**, as sinking dry air inhibits cloud development.

How is MJO Formed?

- **Surface convergence** of winds initiates rising air motion in the tropics.
- This leads to **condensation and cloud formation**,

supported by upper-level divergence.

- The entire dipole system moves from west to east across the equator, especially between **30°N and 30°S** latitude.

Factors Influencing MJO:

- **Sea Surface Temperature (SST)** anomalies, particularly in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.
- **Atmospheric moisture content** and **zonal wind anomalies**.
- Seasonal conditions like **El Niño**, which can amplify or suppress MJO activity.

Impacts of MJO:

- **On Indian Monsoon:**
 - MJO in its **active phase over the Indian Ocean** can:
 - ✓ Trigger **early monsoon onset**, as seen in **2024 and 2025**.
 - ✓ Boost cyclogenesis and **increase rainfall intensity** during its passage.
 - ✓ Improve **intra-seasonal rainfall variability** and **monsoon breaks**.
- **Global Influence:**
 - Modulates **cyclone frequency** and strength across ocean basins.
 - Alters **jet streams**, influencing **weather extremes** in the U.S., Europe, and Australia.
 - Can cause **cold surges, heatwaves, and floods** in mid-latitude regions.
 - Acts as a **short-term climate modulator** unlike ENSO, which has seasonal effects.

[Syllabus: Miscellaneous](#)

JNANPITH AWARD

Context:

President of India presented the 58th Jnanpith Award to Jagadguru Rambhadracharya (Sanskrit) in New Delhi.

- Renowned poet Gulzar (Urdu poet) also received the award but could not attend due to health reasons.



About Jnanpith Award:

- **What is the Jnanpith Award?**
 - India's **highest literary honour**, awarded annually for outstanding contribution to Indian literature.
- **Established in:** 1961 by the **Bharatiya Jnanpith Trust**, founded by industrialist Sahu Shanti Prasad Jain.
- **Objective:** To **honour literary excellence** in Indian languages and promote the cultural and intellectual heritage of India.
- **Historical Background:**
 - Idea conceived on **Sahu Shanti Prasad Jain's 50th birthday** (22 May 1961).
 - First award conferred in **1965**.
- **Eligibility Criteria:**
 - **Only Indian citizens** are eligible.
 - The award is open to **all Indian languages listed in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution**, and **English**. (from the 49th award).
 - A language becomes **ineligible for 3 years** once awarded.
- **Selection Process:**
 - **Proposals Invited:** From universities, literary bodies, critics, and readers across the country.
 - **Language Advisory Committees (LACs):**
 - Each language has a 3-member committee of literary experts.
 - LACs are **reconstituted every 3 years**.
 - Free to consider names beyond submitted proposals.
 - **Evaluation Criteria:**
 - Comprehensive assessment of an author's **entire literary contribution**.
 - Must reflect **contemporary relevance and cultural impact**.
 - **Selection Board:**
 - Comprises **7 to 11 eminent scholars** of high integrity.
 - Recommendations from LACs are reviewed for final decision.
- **Award Details:**
 - **Award Components:**
 - **Cash prize** (currently ₹11 lakh),
 - **Citation and plaque**.
 - Earlier awarded for a **specific work** (first 17 awards); now recognizes **overall literary contribution**.

INTERNATIONAL BOOKER PRIZE - 2025

Context:

Banu Mushtaq, Kannada author and activist, has won the International Booker Prize 2025 for her short story collection *Heart Lamp*, translated into English by Deepa Bhashti.

About International Booker Prize, 2025:

- **Established:** 2005
- **Given By:** Booker Prize Foundation, UK
- **Frequency:** Annually awarded
- **Purpose:** Honors the **best translated work of fiction** into English from any language.
- **Award Amount:** £50,000 (shared equally between author and translator)



- **Key Features:**
 - Focuses exclusively on **translated fiction**, unlike the **Booker Prize** which is for English-original works.
 - Recognizes **literary excellence**, cultural richness, and **the art of translation**.
- **Indian Winners (International Booker)**
 - **Geetanjali Shree** – *Tomb of Sand* (2022), translated by Daisy Rockwell (First Hindi work to win)
 - **Banu Mushtaq** – *Heart Lamp* (2025), translated by Deepa Bhashti (First Kannada work to win)

About Banu Mushtaq:

- **Born:** April 3, 1948, Hassan, Karnataka
- **Professions:** Advocate, journalist, writer, women's rights activist, former municipal councillor
- **Associated with:** Bandaya Movement – Kannada protest literature for social justice
- **Literary Career:**
 - Began writing in **1974**, first published in *Prajamatha*.
 - Reported for **Lankesh Patrike** (1981–1990), mentored by P. Lankesh.
 - Transitioned to law and continued writing on **gender, caste, and religious issues**.
- **Heart Lamp (2025 Winner):**

- A **collection of 12 short stories** written between 1990 and 2023.
- Portrays the **lives of ordinary South Indian Muslim women**, dealing with **patriarchy, faith, family, and autonomy**.
- Translated from Kannada by **Deepa Bhashti**, who also became the **first Indian translator to win this prize**.

- **Other Notable Works:**

- Benki Male (1999) – Karnataka Sahitya Academy Award
- Haseena Mattu Itara Kathegalu (2015) – Translated as Haseena and Other Stories
- Her short story "**Black Cobra**" was adapted into the award-winning film *Hasina* by Girish Kasaravalli.

NATIONAL FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE AWARDS 2025

Context:

President Droupadi Murmu presented the National Florence Nightingale Awards 2025 to 15 exceptional nursing professionals at Rashtrapati Bhavan.



About National Florence Nightingale Awards 2025:

- **What It Is?**
 - A prestigious national award recognizing meritorious services of nurses and midwives in India.
- **Awarded By:** Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India.
- **Established:** Instituted in the year **1973** as a tribute to **Florence Nightingale**, the founder of modern nursing.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Award Components:**
 - **Cash prize** of ₹1,00,000.
 - **Medal and Certificate of Merit**.

- **Eligibility:**
 - Open to **Auxiliary Nurse Midwives (ANM), Staff Nurses, Lady Health Visitors (LHV)**, and others engaged in **nursing and public health services**.
 - Candidates are nominated by **state governments, UTs, and healthcare institutions**.
- **Selection Process:**
 - Involves **rigorous evaluation** by expert panels from the health sector.
 - Based on service record, dedication, innovation, and public health impact.
- **Awardees 2025:**
 - Recognized nurses from **15 states and UTs** including Delhi, Karnataka, Mizoram, Tamil Nadu, and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.
 - Notably includes the **Devrani sisters from Uttarakhand** for their four-decade-long service.
- **Significance:**
 - **Promotes excellence** in the healthcare sector by motivating frontline workers.
 - Highlights the **role of nurses in public health**, maternal care, immunization, and rural outreach.
 - Strengthens the **spirit of service, empathy, and dedication**, especially in **resource-limited settings**.
 - Encourages more youth to **pursue nursing as a noble profession**, essential to India's health system resilience.