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**STATE
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(CONSOLIDATION)

BIHAR

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New Ramsar Sites in Bihar

Why in News?

According to the officials, two of Bihar's **wetlands** have been added to the **global list of wetlands of international importance** under the **Ramsar Convention**.

- This brings the total number of such wetlands in **India to 82**.

Key Points

- **The Nagi and Nakti bird sanctuaries** in Bihar's **Jamui district** are now part of the Ramsar Convention.
 - Both the bird sanctuaries are built on **human-made wetlands** primarily developed for irrigation through the construction of the **Nakti Dam**.
 - Both sanctuaries were designated as Bird Sanctuaries in 1984 due to their importance as **wintering habitats** for migratory species.
 - This includes one of the largest congregations of **red-crested pochard (Netta rufina)** and **bar-headed geese (Anser indicus)** on the **Indo-Gangetic plain**.
 - The catchment area features **dry deciduous forests** surrounded by hills.
- Flora and Fauna:
 - These wetlands provide habitats for over 150 species of birds, mammals, fish, aquatic plants, reptiles, and amphibians.
 - They host globally threatened species such as the endangered **Indian elephant** and the vulnerable native catfish.
 - According to the **Asiatic Waterbird Census 2023**, the Nakti Bird Sanctuary reported 7,844 birds, the highest in the survey, followed by the Nagi Bird Sanctuary with 6,938 birds.
- These sites were declared as Wetlands of International importance on the occasion of **World Environment Day on 5th June**.

Red-Crested Pochard



- The red-crested pochard (*Netta rufina*) is a **large diving duck**.
- Its **breeding habitat is lowland marshes and lakes in southern Europe** and it extends from the steppe and semi-desert areas on the **Black Sea to Central Asia** and Mongolia, **wintering in the Indian Subcontinent and Africa**.
- Conservation Status:
 - **IUCN Red List**- Least Concern
 - **CITES**- Appendix II

Note:



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RAMSAR CONVENTION

About

- Also known as the Convention on Wetlands.
- An intergovernmental treaty, adopted in 1971, in Ramsar, Iran.
 - Entered into force in 1975.
- Wetlands that are of international importance are declared as Ramsar sites.
- **Largest Ramsar Site in World: Pantanal: South America**

Montreux Record

- Adopted in Montreux (Switzerland) in 1990.
- Identifies Ramsar sites that need priority conservation attention at national or international level.

Wetlands

- A place in which the land is covered by water – salt, fresh, or somewhere in between – either seasonally or permanently.
- Take many forms including rivers, marshes, bogs, mangroves, mudflats, ponds, swamps, billabongs, lagoons, lakes, and floodplains.
- **World Wetlands Day: 2nd February**



India & Ramsar Convention

- Came into force in India: **1982**
- **Total Number of Ramsar Sites: 75**
 - Chilika Lake (Odisha), Keoladeo National Park (Rajasthan), Harike Lake (Punjab), Loktak Lake (Manipur), Wular Lake (Jammu and Kashmir), etc.
- **Related Framework in India**
 - The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has notified Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 as regulatory framework for conservation and management of wetlands.
 - The 2017 Rules decentralise wetlands management and provide for the constitution of the State Wetlands Authority or Union Territory Wetlands Authority.

Key Facts

- **Largest Ramsar Site:** Sunderbans, West Bengal
- **Smallest Ramsar Site:** Vembannur Wetland Complex, Tamil Nadu
- **State with the maximum number of Ramsar Sites:** Tamil Nadu (14)
- **Wetlands in Montreux Record:**
 - Keoladeo National Park: Rajasthan
 - Loktak Lake: Manipur



Sustainable Development in Bihar

Why in News?

According to the **Tata-Cornell Institute for Agriculture and Nutrition (TCI)** at Cornell University, Bihar can make significant progress towards **sustainable development** by implementing three transformative technologies in the **agricultural sector**.

Key Points

- In a policy brief it is emphasised that Bihar can reduce the **Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions** associated with **rice and livestock production** while maintaining or even improving productivity.
- The policy brief discusses a study carried out within TCI's Zero-Hunger, **Zero-Carbon Food Systems project**, which seeks to develop a strategy to decrease agricultural emissions in Bihar while maintaining productivity levels.
 - Agriculture accounts for 20% of India's GHG emissions nationally, with Bihar being one of the states significantly affected by **malnutrition**, especially among young children.
 - According to TCI research, Bihar could reduce emissions by 9.4-11.2 metric tons each year by **adopting alternate wetting and drying for paddy cultivation**, advanced artificial insemination for cattle breeding, and anti-methanogenic feed supplements in its **livestock sector**.
 - Research shows that alternate wetting and drying, advanced breeding techniques, and **anti-methanogenic feeds** can help Bihar to lower its agricultural emissions without damaging productivity.
 - The policy presented a breakdown of emissions reductions for each of Bihar's four agroclimatic zones. For alternate wetting and drying, Bihar's southwest and northwest zones have the highest potential mitigation levels.
 - **Bihar's Four Agroclimatic Zones:** Zone-I, North Alluvial Plain, Zone-II, north East Alluvial Plain, Zone-III A South East Alluvial Plain and Zone-III B, South West Alluvial Plain

Note:

Note: Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has developed an anti-methanogenic feed supplement '**Harit Dhara**' (HD), which can **cut down cattle methane emissions by 17-20%** and can also result in higher milk production.

Special Category Status for Bihar

Why in News?

Bihar's Chief Minister Nitish Kumar **reiterated the state's longstanding demand for special category status** from the Centre.

- This status would **lead to an increase in the tax revenues** that Bihar receives from the Centre.

Key Points

- One of the key concerns is **Bihar's low per capita income**, which is around ₹60,000, among the lowest in the country. Additionally, the State **lags behind the national average in various human development indicators**.
- Furthermore, Bihar's fiscal situation has been **negatively impacted by factors such as the bifurcation of the State**, leading to industries moving to Jharkhand, lack of adequate water resources for irrigation, and frequent natural disasters.
- Bihar's caste based survey of 2022 shows that **nearly a third of the State's people live under the poverty line**.
 - In 2023, the Bihar government estimated that the granting of the special category status will help the State receive an additional 2.5 lakh crore rupees over five years **to spend on the welfare of 94 lakh crore poor families**.
- Historically, States like Bihar and Uttar Pradesh suffered slow growth and **high poverty levels due to poor rule of law that discouraged investments** considered crucial to boosting growth.
- But now, as one of the fastest growing States in the country, despite originating from a lower starting point, **Bihar has managed to increase its per capita income level** and also the size of its overall economy at a brisk pace in recent years.
 - In 2022-23, for instance, Bihar's **Gross Domestic Product (GDP)** grew at 10.6% as against the national average of 7.2% while its per capita income level in real terms grew by 9.4% in 2023.

Special Category Status (SCS)

- About:
 - SCS is a classification **granted to some States by the Centre** to assist development, based on geographical and socio-economic disadvantages.
 - The scheme was **introduced in 1969** on the recommendation of the Fifth **Finance Commission**.
- Factors considered for granting SCS to a State:
 - Hilly and difficult terrain
 - Low population density and/or sizeable share of tribal population
 - Strategic location along international borders
 - Economic and infrastructural backwardness
 - Non-viable nature of State finances
- The 14th Finance Commission has done away with the '**special category status**' for states, except for the Northeastern and three hill states.
- **States with Special Status:** Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, and Uttarakhand.

Drug Trafficking

Why in News?

Recently, **two alleged women smugglers were arrested with over 26 kg of cannabis** near the Tripura-Mizoram inter-state boundary.

- Both women were booked under the **Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985**.

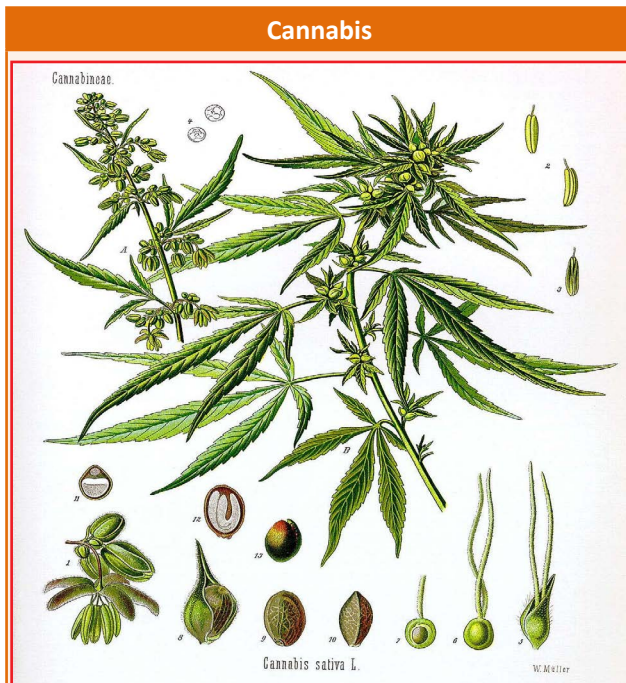
Key Points

- NDPS Act, 1985 **prohibits a person from producing, possessing, selling, purchasing, transporting, storing, and/or consuming any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance**.
 - The **National Fund for Control of Drug Abuse was also created under a provision of the NDPS Act, 1985**, to meet the expenditure incurred in the implementation of the Act.
- Drug trafficking **refers to the illegal trade involving the cultivation, manufacture, distribution, and sale of illicit drugs**.
 - It **encompasses a wide range of activities** associated with the illegal drug trade, including the production

Note:

of drugs such as cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, and synthetic drugs, as well as the transportation and distribution of these substances.

- Drug trafficking **operates within a complex network of criminal organisations** that span across borders, regions, and even continents.



- According to the **WHO (World Health Organization)**, cannabis is a generic term used to denote the several psychoactive preparations of the plant Cannabis sativa.
 - According to the WHO, cannabis is by far the **most widely cultivated, trafficked and abused illicit drug in the world.**
 - Most species of cannabis are dioecious plants that can be identified as either male or female. The unpollinated female plants are called hashish.
- The **major psychoactive constituent in cannabis is Delta9 tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).**

NEET Leak Controversy

Why in News?

The **National Eligibility and Entrance Test (NEET) Undergraduate exam paper** leak has escalated, leading to protests demanding a **re-test** and a **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) probe.**

- The **Economic Offences Unit (EOU)** disclosed that **NEET aspirants** paid up to **₹30 lakh** for **leaked exam papers** in Bihar.

Key Points

- The **Supreme Court** is hearing several petitions related to **NEET**, though it has not stayed counseling for admissions based on the results.
 - This unfolding scandal **highlights deep-rooted issues** in the examination system and underscores the urgent need for reform and accountability.
- The **National Eligibility Entrance Test (NEET)**, formerly the **All-India Pre-Medical Test (AIPMT)**, is the qualifying test for **MBBS and BDS programmes** in Indian medical and dental colleges.
- It was introduced in **2013** by the **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)** and is now conducted by the **National Testing Agency (NTA)**.
 - NTA was established as a Society registered under the **Indian Societies Registration Act, 1860.**
 - It is an **autonomous and self-sustained testing organisation** to conduct entrance examinations for admission/fellowship in higher educational institutions.

Nalanda University

Why in News?

The **Prime Minister of India** will inaugurate the new campus of **Nalanda University** at Rajgir, Bihar.

Key Points

- The University is conceived as a **joint collaboration** between **India** and **East Asia Summit (EAS)** countries.
- The Campus is a **'Net Zero'** Green Campus. It is **self-sustainable** with a **solar plant, domestic and drinking water treatment plant, water recycling plant** for reusing wastewater, **100 acres of water bodies**, and many other environment friendly facilities.
- The **original Nalanda University**, established around **1600 years ago**, is considered to be amongst the **first residential universities of the world.**
- The **ruins of Nalanda University** was declared as a **UN Heritage Site.**
- **East Asia Summit:**
 - The **EAS** was established in **2005** as an **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)-led initiative.**

Note:

- The EAS is the only **leader-led forum** in the **Indo-Pacific** that brings together all key partners to discuss political, security and economic issues of strategic importance.
- The EAS operates on the principles of **openness, inclusiveness, respect for international law, ASEAN centrality, and ASEAN's role** as the driving force.

Patna High Court Nullifies Bihar's Quota Enhancement

Why in News?

The **Patna High Court** overturned the Bihar government's decision to raise the **reservation quota** for **backward classes, scheduled castes, and scheduled tribes** from **50% to 65% in government jobs and higher educational institutions** in the state.

Key Points

- The Bihar government has released a **gazette notification** for two reservation bills, namely the **Bihar Reservation of Vacancies in Posts and Services Amendment Bill, 2023** and the **Bihar Reservation Amendment Bill, 2023**.
- These bills will raise the current reservation percentage from **50% to 65%**, resulting in the **total reservation quota in the state reaching 75%** when the additional **10%** for the **economically weaker sections (EWS)** is included.
- The amendments are violative of **the Supreme Court** verdict passed in the case of **Indira Sawhney versus Union of India** whereby a maximum ceiling of **50%** was laid down.
- The quota hike was also discriminatory in nature and violative of the **fundamental rights to equality** as guaranteed to the citizens by **Articles 14, 15 and 16**.

Indira Sawhney & Others vs Union of India, 1992

- The Supreme Court while upholding the 27% quota for backward classes, struck down the government notification reserving 10% government jobs for economically backward classes among the higher castes.
- SC in the same case also upheld the principle that the combined **reservation beneficiaries should not exceed 50%** of India's population.

- The concept of **'creamy layer'** also gained currency through this judgment and provision that reservation for backward classes should be confined to initial appointments only and not extend to promotions.

Fundamental Rights

➤ Article 14: Equality Before Law

- It says that **no person shall be denied treatment of equality before the law** or the equal protection of the laws within the territory of India.
- The right is **extended to all persons whether citizens or foreigners, statutory corporations, companies, registered societies** or any other type of legal person.

➤ Article 15: Prohibition of Discrimination

- It provides that **no citizen shall be discriminated on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth**.

➤ Article 16: Equality of Opportunity in Public Employment

- Article 16 of the Indian constitution provides for **equality of opportunity for all citizens in matters of employment or appointment to any public office**.

Bridge Collapse in Bihar

Why in News?

Recently, an under-construction bridge in Bihar's **East Champaran district** collapsed, making it the third such incident in the state in a week.

Key Points

- The 16-meter-long bridge, over a canal in the Ghorasahan block, was being built by the **Rural Works Department (RWD)** at a cost of Rs 1.5 crore.
 - According to the officials, a **departmental inquiry** has been initiated as a serious issue has arisen, and severe measures will be enforced against the individuals responsible.
 - This incident follows two similar occurrences in the state in **Siwan and Araria district**.

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Bihar Cancels Contracts Awarded During Mahagathbandhan Regime

Why in News?

Recently, the Bihar government cancelled 350 contracts worth Rs 826 crore that were awarded by the previous 'Mahagathbandhan' dispensation for supplying **drinking water** in rural areas.

Key Points

- The contracts were canceled due to **irregularities in the contractor selection process**, as revealed by an inquiry conducted by the **Public Health Engineering Department**.
- According to the sources, **Banka district tops the list** where a maximum of 106 contracts related to rural water supply systems have been cancelled, followed by Jamui, Lakhisarai, Aurangabad and Ara.
 - Officials from various departments including health, road construction, urban development, and rural works have been instructed to review the decisions made by the previous grand alliance government in the state.

Public Health Engineering Department (PHED)

- It is a government agency **responsible for providing safe drinking water and sanitation facilities** to the public.
- It plays a crucial role in **improving public health and well-being**.

Bihar to Bring Stringent Law Against Paper Leaks

Why in News?

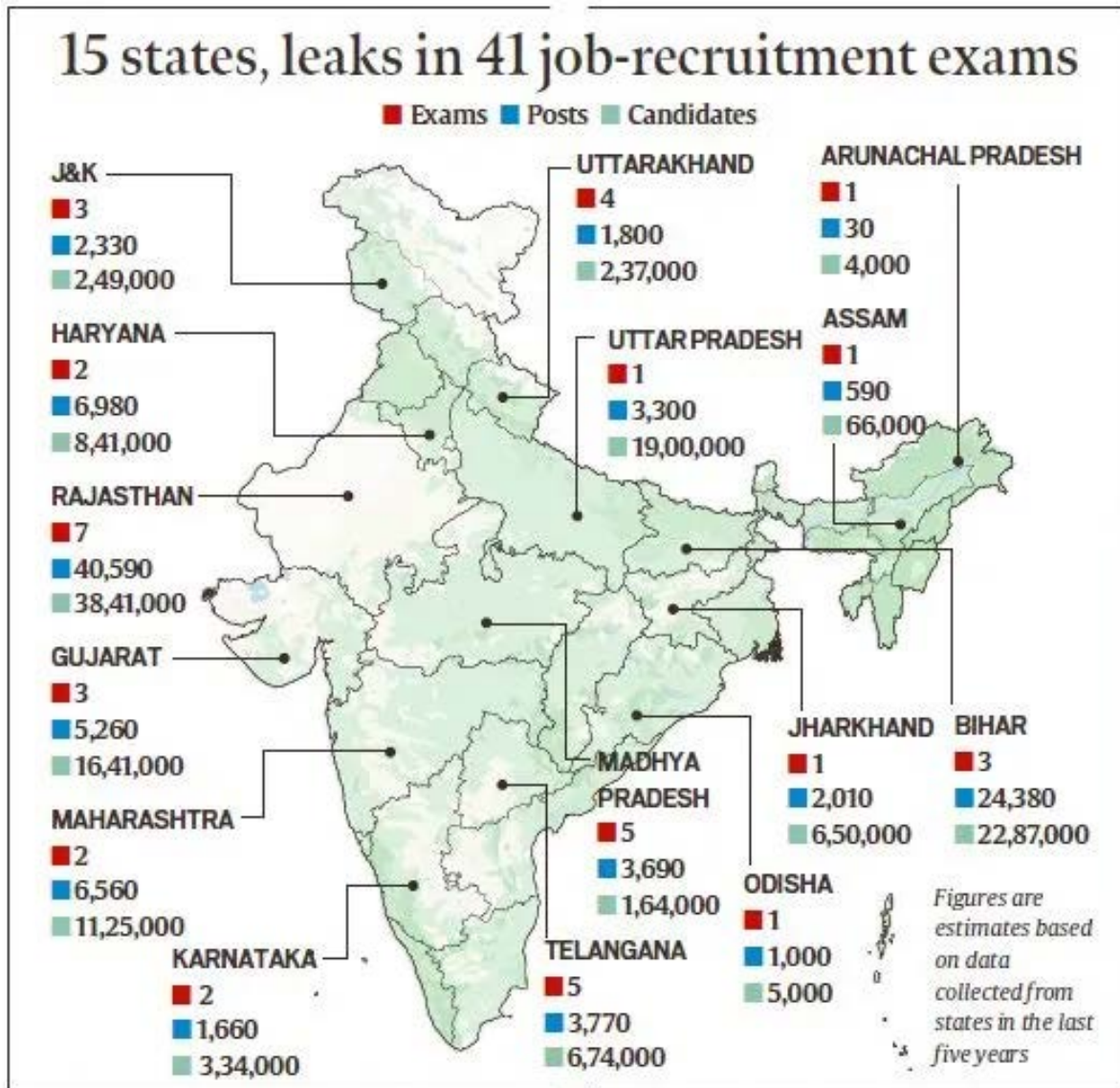
Recently, Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Chaudhary asserted that the state government would bring in a stringent law to curb exam paper leaks.

- The **new law will be passed** by the assembly in the upcoming **monsoon session** of the state legislature.

Key Points

- The central government has already notified the **Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024**, which aims to prevent unfair means in public examinations and common entrance tests held across the country.
- Key Features:
 - It defines various offences related to unfair means, such as paper leaks, the use of **fake websites, and collusion with service providers**.
 - It prescribes strict penalties, including a **minimum jail term of 3-5 years and a fine up to Rs. 1 crore**.
 - It holds **service providers** engaged for exam conduct liable with fines up to Rs 1 crore and a 4-year ban on their involvement in public exams.
 - It empowers **police officers** not below the rank of **Deputy Superintendent of Police or Assistant Commissioner of Police** to investigate offences under the Act.
 - It will cover a wide range of central government recruitment exams, including those conducted by **UPSC, SSC, RRBs, IBPS, and National Testing Agency (NTA)**.

Note:



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Key Points

Details

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Summary

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