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JAMMU & KASHMIR

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Progress of PMGSY in Jammu & Kashmir

Why in News?

Under the centrally sponsored **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)** nearly **3,500 projects, including 217 bridges, have been completed** over the past two decades in Jammu and Kashmir.

Key Points

- **Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY):**
 - PMGSY was launched on **25th December, 2000**.
 - However, the PMGSY was **introduced in J&K in 2001-02** to provide **all-weather connectivity to rural habitations** with populations above 250, based on the **2001 Census**.
 - **Objective:** To provide connectivity, by way of an all-weather road to unconnected habitations.
 - **Eligibility:** Unconnected habitations of designated population size (500+ in plain areas and 250+ in **North-Eastern States, Himalayan States, Deserts and Tribal Areas** as per 2001 census) in the core network for uplifting the socio-economic condition of the rural population.
- **Progress and Achievements of PMGSY in J&K:**
 - A total of 3,742 projects, including 305 bridges, with a road length of 20,801 km, have been approved since its inception.
 - As of now, 3,429 projects, including 217 bridges, have been completed, connecting 2,129 out of the targeted 2,140 habitations, with an expenditure of Rs 12,650 crore.
- **Recent developments of PMGSY in J&K:**
 - Over the last five years, PMGSY in J&K has received focused attention, significantly improving rural connectivity, especially in remote and hilly areas, aligning with the **“Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas” vision**.
 - The uncompromising **quality standards for road and bridge construction to ensure durable and safe infrastructure** for the region was emphasized.
 - The need for **daily monitoring to address challenges and meet project timelines** effectively was highlighted.

Phases of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)

- **PMGSY - Phase I**
 - PMGSY - Phase I was launched in December, 2000 as a 100 % **centrally sponsored scheme**.
 - Under the scheme, 1,35,436 habitations were targeted for providing road connectivity and 3.68 lakh km. for upgradation of existing rural roads in order to ensure full farm to market connectivity.
- **PMGSY - Phase II**
 - The Government subsequently launched **PMGSY-II in 2013** for **upgradation of 50,000 Kms of existing rural road network** to improve its overall efficiency.
 - While the ongoing PMGSY - I continued, under PMGSY phase II, the **roads already built for village connectivity were to be upgraded** to enhance rural infrastructure.
 - The cost was **shared between the centre and the states/UTs**.
- **PMGSY - Phase III**
 - Phase III was approved by the Cabinet during July 2019.
 - It gives priorities to facilities like:
 - Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAMs)
 - GrAMs are retail agricultural markets in close proximity to the farm gate that promote and service a more efficient transaction of the farmers' produce.
 - Higher Secondary Schools and
 - Hospitals.
 - Under the PMGSY-III Scheme, it is proposed to consolidate **1,25,000 Km** road length in the States. The duration of the scheme is **2019-20 to 2024-25**.

Post Offices in Remote Areas of J&K

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Communications informed that **Jammu and Kashmir currently has 1,617 operational post offices** which improved access to postal, financial,

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Note:

and insurance services in **remote and underserved regions**.

- 34 new post offices were established during the 2023-24 financial year.

Key Points

- **Policy on New Post Offices:**
 - The **establishment of new post offices is an ongoing process** guided by identified needs and established norms.
 - The government **aims to provide essential postal services** even in the most remote areas.
- **Government's Vision:**
 - The initiative reflects a **strong commitment** to enhancing infrastructure in **geographically challenging and underserved regions**.
 - This effort underscores the focus on **improving accessibility and ensuring equitable access** to postal services.

India Post

➤ About:

- India Post is the trade name for the Department of Posts (DoP), a government-operated postal system in India under the **Ministry of Communications**.
- With **164,972 post offices** (as of 2024) Post Offices, the DoP has the **most widely distributed postal network in the world**.

➤ Functions:

- Delivering **mails**, accepting deposits under **Small Savings Schemes**, providing **life insurance cover** under **Postal Life Insurance (PLI)** and **Rural Postal Life Insurance (RPLI)** and providing **retail services** like bill collection, sale of forms, etc.
- It also acts as an agent for the Government in discharging other services for citizens such as **Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS)** wage disbursement and old age pension payments.

➤ Significance:

- India Post has been serving the people in an extraordinary way in the difficult situation which has emerged due to **Covid-19**, by bringing them **medicines and financial assistance**.

- The Postal Department has been playing a major role in the implementation of Government schemes, leveraging the **immense strength of its vast network**.
- Postal schemes are known for providing **highly secured deposits**, they provide a **higher return of interest with low risk**.

First Annual Review Meeting of RuTAG 2.0 Projects

Why in News?

Recently, the first annual review meeting of the **Rural Technology Action Group (RuTAG) 2.0 projects** was held at the **Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology (SKUAST)**, Srinagar, Kashmir.

Key Points

➤ Rural Technology Action Group (RuTAG):

○ About:

- RuTAG is an initiative of the office of the **Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA)** since 2004.
- It was conceptualized as a **mechanism to provide a higher level of science and technology intervention and support for rural areas**.
- Under this initiative, the interventions are designed to be primarily **demand-driven, focusing on bridging technology gaps at the grassroots level, upgrading technology**, and providing training and demonstrations through innovative projects.

○ Achievements:

- Effective outreach to **Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), Self-Help Groups (SHGs)**, and community organizations.
- Innovations reduced labor, enhanced production, and improved rural livelihoods.

○ RuTAG 2.0:

- It was **launched in April 2023** to focus on commercialization and **widespread dissemination of technologies across sectors** such as **agriculture, textiles, energy, water conservation, healthcare**, and more.

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➤ Event Activities:

- The foundation stone was laid down for a **system designed to improve water and fertilizer efficiency**, promoting **sustainable farming**.
- Dignitaries **explored ongoing research and technological advancements** at SKUAST-Kashmir.
- Demonstrations from seven RuTAG centres showcased **grassroots innovations for rural development**.
- The **official RuTAG logo was introduced** to unify and strengthen communication among stakeholders.
- RuTAG Centres that were present in the meeting were SKUAST-Kashmir, IIT Bombay, IIT Roorkee, IIT Guwahati, IIT Madras, IIT Delhi, and **Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)-National Academy of Agricultural Research Management (NAARM) Hyderabad**.

➤ Strategic Initiatives:

- **RuTAGe Smart Village Centres (RSVC)** was introduced to transform villages into economic hubs using innovative, affordable, and tailored technologies.
- The event facilitated discussions on **upscaling technologies, design improvements, and expanding adoption** in similar regions across India.



Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA):

- India has had a Principal Scientific Adviser (PSA) since 1999. Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was the first PSA from 1999-2001.
- The PSA's office aims to provide pragmatic and objective advice to the Prime Minister and the cabinet in matters of Science and Technology. The Office of PSA was placed under the **Cabinet Secretariat** in 2018.

- The **Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC)** is an **overarching Council** that facilitates the PSA's Office to assess the status in specific science and technology domains, comprehend challenges in hand, formulate specific interventions, develop a futuristic roadmap and advise the Prime Minister accordingly.
- The Office of PSA, supported by the project management team at **Invest India**, is facilitating the **delivery and progress of all Nine national missions under PM-STIAC**. Four of the nine missions, **Deep Ocean Mission, Natural Language Translation mission, AI mission, and Quantum Frontier mission** have been approved.

Markhor

Why in News?

Recently, Markhor, a **wild goat** with spiral-shaped horns, was spotted in Baramulla district of North Kashmir.



Key Points

- **About:**
 - Markhor is the **largest wild goat** in the world. It is known for its thick fur, flowing beard and corkscrew horns.
- **Legal Protection and Species Status:**
 - Markhor, scientifically known as *Capra falconeri*, is classified as "**Near Threatened**" by the **IUCN** and protected under Schedule I of India's **Wildlife Protection Act, 1972**.
- **Threats to Survival:**
 - Primary threats include **habitat loss** from fencing, illegal grazing, **poaching**, and **encroachment**. **Climate change** is also affecting food resources, driving Markhor closer to human settlements.

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Note:

- **Global Recognition and Initiatives:**
 - Recognizing its ecological importance, the [UN General Assembly](#) designated **24th May** as the **International Day of the Markhor** to encourage conservation efforts.
- **Significance as a Flagship Species:**
 - Markhor serves as a flagship species for conservation in J&K, helping protect other regional wildlife, such as [Musk Deer](#) and [Brown Bear](#).
- **Distribution and Habitat:**
 - The endangered Markhor inhabits **moist to semi-arid mountain regions** across **Pakistan, India (Jammu & Kashmir), Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan.**
 - In J&K, it's found in areas like **Shopian, the Pir Panjal range, and Kazinag Uri**, but its population is fragmented due to human interference and habitat loss.

UNHCR team Meets Rohingya refugees in Jammu

Why in News?

Recently, a two-membered team of [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(UNHCR\)](#) visited [Rohingya refugees](#) staying in Jammu and surrounding areas.

Key Points

- The visit followed controversy over the administration's order to disconnect water and power supplies to slums housing illegal Rohingyas.
- Jammu's Jal Shakti Minister clarified that water and power supply to these areas would not be cut.
- **Government and Public Response:**
 - Local organisations and political groups have been calling for the deportation of Rohingya refugees.
 - The Chief Minister stated that while the **Centre must decide the fate of the Rohingyas**, they cannot be left to suffer from starvation or cold.
- **NGO and Aadhaar Linkages:**
 - Investigations revealed that four [Non-governmental Organizations \(NGOs\)](#) were helping Rohingyas settle in Jammu.



- Reports indicate that **158 Rohingyas obtained Aadhaar cards unlawfully**, and several Rohingya women have married local youths in Jammu and Kashmir.
- According to government data, **over 13,700 foreigners, including Rohingyas and Bangladeshi nationals, reside in Jammu and other districts of J&K.**

Legal and Political Actions:

- [First Information Reports \(FIR\)](#) were recently registered against landlords **renting properties to Rohingyas without informing the police**, violating district magistrate orders.

National Security Concerns:

- **Political organisations have urged the Central Government to deport Bangladeshi and Rohingya refugees**, citing potential national security risks.

Rohingya Crisis

- The Rohingya people have suffered decades of **violence, discrimination and persecution in Myanmar.**
 - Rohingyas are not recognized as an official ethnic group and have been **denied citizenship since 1982.** They are one of the largest stateless populations in the world.
- Since the early 1990s, the **Rohingyas have fled successive waves of violence in Myanmar.**

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- Their largest and fastest exodus began in August 2017 when violence broke out in [Myanmar's Rakhine State](#), driving more than 742,000 people to seek refuge in neighbouring countries, the majority of whom were women and children.

J&K to Host Khelo India Winter Games 2025

Why in News?

Jammu & Kashmir is set to host the [Khelo India Winter Games \(KIWG\) 2025](#) from 23rd to 27th January 2025. Ladakh will host ice sports, including ice hockey and ice skating events.

Key Points

- **Khelo India Winter Games:**
 - For the second consecutive year, the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) and Ladakh jointly hosted the Khelo India Winter Games.
 - J&K previously hosted all events but Ladakh successfully organized ice events, such as skating and hockey.
- **Origins and Growth of Participation:**
 - The Khelo India Winter Games began in 2020, attracting nearly 1,000 athletes, including 306 women, in its inaugural year.
 - Participation steadily increased, with over 1,350 athletes in 2021 and more than 1,500 in 2022, reflecting the games' growing popularity in the region.
- **KIWG 2024:**
 - The 2024 Winter Games featured over 1,200 participants, including:
 - More than 700 athletes.
 - A total of 136 medals were contested during the event.
- **Increased Professional Management:**
 - For the first time, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, in collaboration with [the Sports Authority of India \(SAI\)](#), [National Sports Federations](#), and the [Indian Olympic Association](#), managed the technical conduct of the games.

Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG)

- The KIWG is a multidisciplinary, national-level winter sports competition that promotes winter sports and encourages more athletes to take up skiing and skating.
- It includes events such as skiing, alpine skiing, nordic skiing, snow rugby, ice stock sport, snow baseball, mountaineering, snowshoe running, ice hockey, figure skating, and speed skating.
- It is organized by the [Sports Authority of India](#) and the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- The 2025 KIWG will be held in the Union Territory of Ladakh from 23 to 27 January for ice events, and in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir from 22 to 25 February for snow events.

Pakistani Drone Seized in Jammu

Why in News?

Recently, a Pakistani drone carrying nearly half a kg of high-grade [narcotic substance](#) was seized by the [Border Security Force \(BSF\)](#) near [the International Border](#).

Key Points

- **Quadcopter Entry and Seizure:**
 - A [quadcopter](#) entered India from across the border and was seized from the Chinaz Border Outpost area in the Arnia sector.
- **BSF's Vigilance and Commitment:**
 - The BSF praised the dedication and vigilance of its personnel in Jammu.
 - The official highlighted that the troops' efforts once again defeated the nefarious designs of anti-national elements.
 - The statement emphasized the **BSF's unwavering commitment to the nation's security**.

Border Security Force (BSF)

- The BSF was raised in 1965, after the [India-Pakistan war](#).
- It is one of the [seven Central Armed Police Forces](#) of the Union of India under the administrative control of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

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Note:

- Other Central Armed Police Forces are: **Assam Rifles (AR)**, **Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)**, **Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)**, **Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)**, **National Security Guards (NSG)** and **Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)**.
- The 2.65-lakh force is deployed along the Pakistan and Bangladesh borders.
 - It is deployed on the Indo-Pakistan International Border, Indo-Bangladesh International Border, and **Line of Control (LoC)** along with the Indian Army and in **Anti-Naxal Operations**.
- BSF has been defending **Sir Creek** in the **Arabian Sea** and **the Sundarbans delta** in the **Bay of Bengal** with its state of the art fleet of Water Crafts.
- It contributes dedicated services to the **UN peacekeeping Mission** by sending a large contingent of its trained manpower every year.

Northern Command Marks Vijay Diwas

Why in News?

Recently, the **Army's Northern Command** celebrated **Vijay Diwas** across various parts of J&K and Ladakh to commemorate **India's victory over Pakistan in 1971**.

Key Points

- **Vijay Diwas Celebrations by Northern Command:**
 - The General Officer Commanding-in-Chief of the **Northern Command** led the wreath-laying ceremony at the Dhruva War Memorial.
 - During the event, he **honored the brave soldiers of the Indian armed forces**.
 - He also interacted with veterans, acknowledging their legacy of courage and dedication.
- Celebration by the Jammu-based Tiger Division:
 - The **Tiger Division of the Army** commemorated 53 years of India's victory over Pakistan at the Balidan Stambh War Memorial.
 - The ceremony honored the supreme sacrifice of soldiers during the 1971 India-Pakistan War, which concluded in just 13 days on 16th December 1971.

- The Deputy General Officer Commanding, Tiger Division, laid a wreath at the '**Eternal Flame**' of the **Balidan Stambh War Memorial**, paying tribute to the gallant soldiers who thwarted Pakistan's designs during the war.

Vijay Diwas

- Vijay Diwas is observed on **16th December every year** to mark **India's victory over Pakistan in the 1971 war**.
- On **16th December 1971**, the chief of the Pakistani forces had surrendered unconditionally to the allied forces consisting of Indian Army and Mukti Bahini in Dhaka.
- The end of the **14-day war** resulted in subsequent **secession of East Pakistan into Bangladesh**.
- To mark the event, Indian Air Force has also felicitated a team of **25 Air Warriors** for undertaking a running expedition from **Kargil to Kohima**- aptly named as **K2K Ultra Marathon-Glory Run**.

Ropeway Project to Vaishno Devi Shrine

Why in News?

Recently, a **shutdown was observed in Katra** to oppose a ropeway that **will connect Tarakote Marg to Sanji Chhat**, along the 12-kilometre steep track of the **Vaishno Devi shrine**, in the Jammu region.

Key Points

- **Protest Against Ropeway Project:**
 - The **Vaishno Devi Trek Mazdoor Union**, voiced opposition to the **ropeway project**, stating it threatens the livelihood of over 60,000 families, including hoteliers, shopkeepers, pony operators, laborers, and transporters.
 - The **Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sangharsh Samiti** called for a shutdown in Katra, which disrupted business in the local market.
- **Withdrawal of Shutdown Call:**
 - The Samiti withdrew the shutdown after receiving fresh assurances from local authorities.

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Note:

- The Deputy Commissioner requested five days to analyze their demands, according to Samiti members.
- **Shrine Board Meeting Chaired by Lieutenant Governor:**
 - J&K **Lieutenant Governor** chaired the **73rd Meeting of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board at Raj Bhawan**.
 - The Lieutenant Governor inaugurated new **pilgrim-centric facilities** and **laid the foundation stone for a new exit track** aimed at decongesting the Bhawan area.
- **Board's Decisions and Future Plans:**
 - The **Shrine Board conducted** a comprehensive review of its previous decisions but did not issue a specific statement on the ongoing protests in Katra.
 - The Lieutenant Governor emphasized improving transparency and efficiency to enhance the pilgrim experience.
- **MoU to Address Landslides:**
 - The Board approved a tripartite **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with the **Geological Survey of India (GSI)** and **THDC India Limited (THDCIL)**.
 - The MoU **aims to identify and treat slopes vulnerable to landslides and rockfalls** along the Yatra route between Adhkuwari and Bhawan.

Vaishno Devi Temple

- The temple is **located at 5,200 feet in the Trikuta mountains**, sees over one crore visitors annually, with a **12 km trek from Katra**.
- **Key Landmarks:** Darshani Deodhi, Banganga, Chara Paduka, Indraprastha, Adhkuari, Garbha Joon, Himkoti, Haathi Matha, Sanji Chhat Bhavan, Sher ka Panja and Bhairon Mandir.

Migratory Birds in Hokersar Wetland

Why in News?

The **Hokersar wetland** in Srinagar has transformed into a **haven for numerous migratory birds**, drawing the attention of locals and **tourists** alike.

Key Points

- **Winter Arrival of Migratory Birds:**
 - Many **migratory birds from foreign countries flock to Hokersar wetland** during winter, making it a popular destination.
 - The wetland serves as a **crucial stopover** along the Central Asian Flyway, **providing food, shelter, and breeding grounds** for avian travelers.
- **Ideal Habitat for Birds:**
 - Hokersar's rich flora and diverse water bodies make it a perfect refuge for species like the **Siberian crane, bar-headed goose, and various ducks**.
- **Conservation Efforts:**
 - Local authorities and conservation groups are working to **protect Hokersar from threats like pollution and encroachment**.
 - Initiatives such as habitat restoration and proactive water management are vital to maintaining the wetland's ecological health.
 - The **Forest Protection Force** has been deployed to ensure the safety of the birds and prevent **poaching**.

Hokersar Wetland

- **Location:**
 - The Hokersar wetland, a **Ramsar site**, is situated in Srinagar, Jammu and Kashmir. It is **also known as the 'Queen Wetland of Kashmir'**.
- **Geographic Setting:**
 - It is a natural, perennial **wetland that is part of the Jhelum basin** and is located in the **northwest Himalayan biogeographic province of Kashmir**, at the foot of the snow-draped **Pir Panjal range**.
- **Water Source:**
 - The wetland receives water from the **Doodhganga River, a tributary of the Jhelum**.
- **Flora and Fauna:**
 - It is **home to the last remaining reedbeds of Kashmir** and serves as a **critical pathway for 88 waterfowl species**.
 - These birds, **migrating from regions like Siberia, China, Central Asia, and Europe**, include species such as the **little cormorant, common shelduck, large egret, and great crested grebe**.
 - The wetland is **vital for local biodiversity**, offering food sources, spawning grounds, and nurseries for fish, along with breeding habitats for various species.

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High-Level Security Review Meeting on J&K

Why in News?

Recently, the **Union Home Minister** chaired a high-level security review meeting on Jammu and Kashmir.

CENTRAL ARMED POLICE FORCES (CAPF)

The CAPF includes the seven security forces in India functioning under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Assam Rifles (AR)

- ↳ **Origin:** 1835, as militia called 'Cachar Levy'
- ↳ **Erstwhile objective:** To protect British Tea estates
- ↳ **Current Objectives:**
 - ↳ Conducting anti-terrorist operations in NER
 - ↳ Ensuring security at India-China and India-Myanmar borders
- ↳ **Imp Role in:**
 - ↳ Sino-India War 1962
 - ↳ Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) to Sri Lanka (1987)

Due to long association with tribal belts, Assam Rifles are also called 'Friends of the North East'

Border Security Force (BSF)

- ↳ **Origin:** 1965
- ↳ **Objectives:**
 - ↳ Securing land borders with Pakistan and Bangladesh
 - ↳ Also performing Anti-Infiltration in Kashmir Valley
 - ↳ Counter Insurgency in NER
 - ↳ Anti-Naxal Operations in Odisha and Chhattisgarh
- ↳ **Wings:** Air wing, marine wing, an artillery regiment, and commando units

BSF is India's First Line of Defence and the world's largest border guarding force

Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF)

- ↳ **Pre-Independence Origin:** 1939 (Crown Representative's Police)
- ↳ **Post Independence:** 1949 - under CRPF Act, became Central Reserve Police Force
- ↳ **Objective:** Crowd control, riot control, counter militancy/insurgency operations, etc.

CRPF is the principle central police force for internal security

Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP)

- ↳ **Origin:** 1962
- ↳ **Objectives:**
 - ↳ Deployed on border from Karakoram Pass (Ladakh) to Jachep La (Arunachal Pradesh) (~3488 km of Indo-China Border)
 - ↳ Manning Border Outposts on altitudes 9000 ft - 18700 ft in Western, Middle and Eastern sectors of Indo-China Border

ITBP is India's specialised mountain force & the first responder to natural disasters

National Security Guard (NSG)

- ↳ **Origin:** 1984 (came into being in 1986), following **Operation Blue Star**
- ↳ **Objectives:** Counter-terrorism unit/Federal Contingency Force
- ↳ **Task-oriented Force - Two complementary elements:**
 - ↳ Special Action Group (SAG)
 - ↳ Special Ranger Groups (SRG)

Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB)

- ↳ **Origin:** 1963
- ↳ **Objectives:**
 - ↳ Guarding Indo-Nepal and Indo-Bhutan borders
 - ↳ Enhance border security, curb trans-border crimes, prevent unauthorised entry/exit, halt smuggling, etc.

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF)

- ↳ **Origin:** Central Industrial Security Force Act, 1968
- ↳ **Objectives:** Ensuring security of major critical infrastructure installations

CISF is the sole CAPF unit with a specialised fire wing



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Note:

- It was attended by **Lieutenant Governor** of Jammu & Kashmir, Union Home Secretary, Director **Intelligence Bureau (IB)**, **RAW** Chief, **Chief of Army Staff, GOC-in-C (Northern Command)**, **Director General of Military Operations (DGMO)**, Chief Secretary & DGP of Jammu and Kashmir, heads of **Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF)** and other senior officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Key Points

- **Commitment to a Terror-Free Jammu and Kashmir:**
 - The Union Home Minister reaffirmed the government's resolve to achieve a **'Terror-Free Jammu and Kashmir'** at the earliest.
 - He emphasized that all **necessary resources will be made available** to meet this objective.
 - The unprecedented participation of the people in **Jammu and Kashmir during the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections** reflects their faith in the country's democracy.
- **Progress Against Terrorism:**
 - The Union Home Minister commended security agencies for:
 - A significant **decline in terrorist incidents**.
 - Reduced infiltration activities.
 - Lower recruitment of youth into terrorist organizations.
- **Directives to Security Agencies:**
 - Directed all security agencies to **work in a coordinated manner to eradicate terrorism**.
 - Emphasized the need for implementing:
 - **Area Domination Plan**
 - **Zero Terror Plan** in a mission mode.

Deduction from School Syllabus

Why in News?

Recently, the Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister assured that a **chapter on Kashmiri patron Sufi saint, Sheikh Noor-Ud-Din Wali, also called Sheikh-ul-Alam, will not be deleted** from class 9 syllabus.

Key Points

- **Concerns Over Dropping of Chapter on Sufi Saint:**
 - Kulgam MLA **expressed concerns about the reported removal of a chapter on Sheikh-ul-Alam, the revered Sufi saint, from the Class IX textbook.**
 - He termed the decision "deeply troubling" and criticized it as **unacceptable for a society deeply rooted in Sufi traditions.**
 - He also urged the Chief Minister to intervene and ensure the reinstatement of the chapter to **preserve the region's rich cultural and Sufi heritage.**
- **Response from CM:**
 - The Chief Minister responded that the **chapter will not be deleted.**
 - The Education Minister directed the Principal Secretary to **investigate and rectify the issue found in the PDF version of the textbook.**
- **Criticism by Peoples Conference Chief:**
 - This incident was described as **"cultural terrorism"** and an assault on **Kashmir's culture and ethos.**
 - The **saint's teachings were highlighted as a beacon of hope and a role model, especially in current times of violence, greed, and hatred.**

Sheikh Ul Alam

- **Early Life:**
 - Born in the **14th century** in a **small village in Kashmir.**
 - **Raised in a devout Islamic household, deeply rooted in Kashmir's cultural heritage.**
 - Childhood marked by **simplicity, peace, and early exposure to spiritual teachings.**



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Note:

- **Influences and Education:**
 - Grew up in a Kashmir rich in **Sufi traditions, Persian poetry, and ancient Vedic knowledge**, fostering harmony and inclusiveness.
 - Displayed a strong passion for **spiritual awakening and poetry** from a young age.
 - Pursued knowledge under the guidance of renowned academics and Sufi masters.
- **Teachings and Philosophy:**
 - Emphasized **spiritual wisdom, unity, and social consciousness**.
 - His **teachings reflect the harmony of diverse traditions** and the pursuit of inner peace.
- **Legacy:**
 - Left an indelible mark on Kashmiri culture, the Sufi tradition, and beyond.
 - **Remembered as a spiritual and literary icon** whose lessons continue to inspire.

IGNCA Regional Centre Inaugurated in Jammu

Why in News?

Recently, the Lieutenant Governor of J&K, **Manoj Sinha**, inaugurated the regional center of the **Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)** in Jammu.

Key Points

- **Role of Folk Traditions and IGNCA's Contribution:**
 - **Jammu's folk traditions** have been a source of enduring values and ideals, sustaining society through generations.
 - The IGNCA regional centre will nurture cultural virtues, enhance quality of life, and support the preservation and **promotion of Jammu's rich art and cultural heritage**.
 - The intelligentsia was urged to collaborate with organisations like IGNCA to **promote Jammu and Kashmir's artistic heritage and to preserve and propagate the Vedic oral tradition**.
 - India's civilisational ethos of **"Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam"** (the world is one family) and its ongoing relevance globally was highlighted.

- **Role of Youth in Cultural Preservation:**
 - The L-G called on enlightened citizens and stakeholders to encourage artistic thinking in the younger generation, leveraging their creative potential to benefit society.
 - He stressed the importance of making **regional literature, folk music, drama, and Pahari art accessible in every household** through articles, monographs, and books.
- **'Toycathon' Initiative:**
 - The L-G commended **'Toycathon 2024'**, an initiative aimed at grassroots innovation by **designing toys based on local cultural ethos and the lives of regional heroes**.

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA)

- It was **established in 1987** as an **autonomous institution under the Ministry of Culture**, as a centre for research, academic pursuit and dissemination in the field of the arts.
- The **IGNCA has a trust (i.e. Board of Trustees)**, which meets regularly to give general direction about the Centre's work. The Executive Committee, drawn from among the Trustees, functions under a Chairman.
- It is a research unit under **Project Mausam**.
 - Project 'Mausam' is a Ministry of Culture project with **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)**, New Delhi as the nodal agency.
 - The central themes that hold Project 'Mausam' together are those of **cultural routes and maritime landscapes that not only linked different parts of the Indian Ocean littoral, but also connected the coastal centres to their hinterlands**.

Infrastructure Development at J&K Tourist Sites

Why in News?

Recently, the **World Bank** has enlisted **four places in Jammu and Kashmir** to be developed as **international tourist destinations**.

- **These places are** Baderwah in Doda, Bradari in Reasi, Kokernag in Anantnag and Dodapathri in Budgam.

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Key Points

- **World Bank's Intention in Development:**
 - The World Bank intends to fund infrastructure in **specific locations in Jammu and Kashmir to meet international tourism standards.**
- **Planned Projects and Funding:**
 - The World Bank plans to fund infrastructure projects, including:
 - Development of **Bhal Padri meadow and Guldanda meadow**
 - Upgradation of **Jai Valley**
 - Establishment of **Gondola cable car services at Seoz meadows in Baderwah**
 - Interest has been shown in developing **the Kailash Yatra** route to leverage its significant pilgrimage tourism potential.
- **Broader Revamp in J&K:**
 - Other locations to benefit from the initiative include:
 - Dodapathri in Budgam district
 - Kokernag in Anantnag district
 - Bradari in Reasi district
- **Collaboration and Approval:**
 - The project will be executed in **collaboration with the central government.**
 - **Final approval for funding rests with the World Bank**, which will assess the potential of these locations before proceeding.
- **Significance of the Initiative:**
 - The initiative **aims to boost pilgrimage tourism, handicrafts, herbal tourism, and adventure tourism in the region.**

World Bank

- **About:**
 - It was **created in 1944**, as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) along with the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)**. The IBRD later became the World Bank.
 - The World Bank Group is a unique global partnership of five institutions working for sustainable solutions that reduce poverty and build shared prosperity in developing countries.
 - The World Bank is one of the **United Nations'** specialized agencies.

- **Members:**
 - It has **189 member countries.**
 - **India is also a member country.**
- **Major Reports:**
 - **Ease of Doing Business (Stopped publishing).**
 - **Human Capital Index.**
 - **World Development Report.**
- **Its Five Development Institutions:**
 - **International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD)**
 - **International Development Association (IDA)**
 - International Finance Corporation (IFC)
 - **Multilateral Guarantee Agency (MIGA)**
 - International Centre for the Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID)
 - **India is not a member of ICSID.**

Kashmir Papier Mache

Why in News?

Recently, **The dodo** has become a popular **papier mache** product in Srinagar. It was once **native to Mauritius** and a **national emblem**.



Key Points

- **Craftsmanship and Production:**
 - Creating large papier mache dodos in Kashmir's workshops takes 5-10 days.

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Note:

- The colourful designs, featuring floral and forest motifs, highlight the **ecological causes of the dodo's extinction**.
- **History of Papier Mache in Kashmir:**
 - Papier-mâché is a **traditional handicraft in Kashmir** that involves the **use of paper pulp** to create colorful, intricately decorated objects.
 - **Origin:**
 - The tradition of papier-mâché in Kashmir is said to have **begun in the 15th century** when **Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin invited artists and craftsmen from Central Asia** to teach the locals their skills.
 - **Objects:**
 - Papier-mâché objects in Kashmir can include vases, bowls, cups, boxes, trays, and lamp bases. They are **often coated in lacquer to protect them from water** and make them more durable.
 - **Designs:**
 - Popular designs include the **Hazara pattern, which is meant to depict every type of flower**, and the **Gul-i-wilayat pattern, which features flowers, stems, foliage, and sometimes birds**.
 - **Protection:**
 - The **Government of India protects papier-mâché under the Geographic Indication Act of 1999**.

Dodos



- **Scientific name:** *Raphus cucullatus*
- **Characteristics:** It had **grayish feathers** and a distinctive **large, hooked beak**.
- **Habitat:** Endemic to the **island of Mauritius** and lived in forests.
- **Evolutionary History:** It evolved to be **flightless due to the absence of predators** on Mauritius.
 - The dodo likely **had strong running abilities**.
- **Extinction:** Extinct in 1681.

Efforts to Mitigate Risks Due to Glacial Lake

Why in News?

The **Jammu & Kashmir government** has intensified efforts to monitor and mitigate the risks of **Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs)** in response to the growing threats posed by **glacial lake overflows**.

Key Points

- **Scientific Expeditions for Hazard Preparedness:**
 - The **Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction** has initiated scientific expeditions to enhance preparedness and understanding of **GLOF hazards**.
 - These expeditions are collecting valuable data on **lake conditions, environmental factors, and potential GLOF risks**.
- **Study of Glacial Lakes in Kishtwar District:**
 - The Department of Environmental Sciences at the Central University of Jammu, led a comprehensive study on **three critical glacial lakes: Mundiksar, Hangu, and an unnamed lake**.
 - These lakes have been flagged as **high-risk areas for GLOFs**.
 - **Geological Survey of India (GSI)** conducted a detailed study of Bram Sar Lake in Kulgam district to assess its potential GLOF risks.
- **Kashmir Field Expeditions:**
 - In June 2024, the University of Kashmir's Department of Geography & Disaster Management studied two additional glacial lakes in the region.
 - The **expeditions aim to formulate risk mitigation strategies and enhance early warning systems** based on the data collected.
 - **Phase-Wise Implementation:**
 - **Phase One:** Focuses on identifying high-risk glacial lakes using assessments from the **National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)**, **National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC)**, and **Central Water Commission (CWC)**.
 - **Phase Two:** Develops and implements specific mitigation measures, including lake-lowering techniques.

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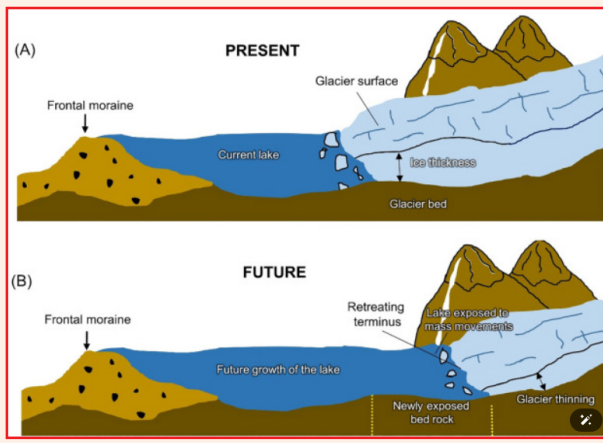
Note:

○ Early Warning System (EWS):

- A fully functional **GLOF Early Warning System** will be established to enhance preparedness and ensure effective responses to potential GLOF events.
- In April 2024, the government constituted the **Focused Glacial Lake Outburst Flood Monitoring Committee (FGMC)** to implement targeted mitigation measures for glacial lake overflows.

Glacial Lake Outburst Flood

- A GLOF is a type of **flood** occurring when **water dammed** by a **glacier** or a **moraine** is released suddenly.
- When glaciers melt, the **water** in these glacial lakes **accumulates** behind loose naturally formed '**glacial/moraine dams**' made of ice, sand, pebbles and ice residue.
- Unlike earthen dams, the weak structure of the moraine dam leads to the **abrupt failure** of the moraine dam on top of the **glacial lake**, which holds a large volume of water.
- A catastrophic failure of the dam can release the water over periods of minutes to days causing **extreme downstream flooding**.



PM Rashtriya Bal Puraskar

Why in News?

Recently, **Ayaan Sajad** from Anantnag district, Jammu and Kashmir was awarded the prestigious **Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar-2024** by **the President** for his extraordinary accomplishments in the fields of art and culture.

Key Points

➤ Extraordinary Talent:

- **Ayaan Sajad, a 12-year-old singer**, has gained widespread recognition for his remarkable talent.
- His **Kashmiri songs** went viral on social media, **making him an Internet sensation with millions of views**, and his music continues to trend in Kashmir.
- He aims to represent his country and native Kashmir, inspiring future generations worldwide to follow their passion.

➤ Acknowledgment and Support:

- National Conference president and State Chief Minister have **congratulated Ayaan for his achievements**.
- They expressed their hope that his talent and dedication will inspire young minds across the region and reaffirmed their commitment to supporting the youth of Jammu and Kashmir in their pursuit of excellence.

Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Bal Puraskar (PMRBP)

➤ About:

- The **PMRBP** is organized to **celebrate the energy, determination, ability, zeal and enthusiasm of children**.
- The awards are conferred upon the children **for their excellence in seven categories**, viz. Art & Culture, Bravery, Environment, Innovation, Science & Technology, Social Service and Sports, which deserve national recognition.
- Each awardee of PMRBP is given a **medal, cash prize of Rs. 1 Lakh, a Certificate and a Citation**.
- The selection of awardees was made by a Selection Committee under the **chairpersonship of the Union Minister for Women and Child Development**.
 - The **Awards are given by the President of India** in the week preceding **Republic Day** every year.

➤ Eligibility:

- A child who is an **Indian Citizen** and is a **resident of India**.
- A Child above the age of **5 years and not exceeding 18 years** (as on 31st July of respective year).
- The act/incident/achievement should have been within 2 years of the last date of receipt of application/nomination for the year of consideration.

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Note:

Training for Mission YUVA

Why in News?

Recently, the **Ramban district** administration organised a **comprehensive training** for enumerators, supervisors and other stakeholders for **Mission YUVA Baseline Survey**.

Key Points

- **Focus of the Programme:**
 - The programme, presided over by the **District Statistics and Evaluation Officer (DSEO)** and Assistant Director Employment, aimed to **equip participants with skills and knowledge** for conducting the baseline survey under Mission YUVA.
 - Three master trainers conducted sessions, detailing the use of an **online mobile application, survey methodology, and objectives**, with a focus on its paperless execution.
- **Survey Details:**
 - The **baseline survey** will be conducted from **1st to 31st January 2025**.
 - Approximately 600 enumerators, supervisors, and staff will be involved across Ramban district.
- **Mission YUVA:**
 - This initiative is a crucial step toward achieving the objectives of Mission YUVA by providing accurate and actionable data for planning and development.

Western Disturbance Across Northern India

Why in News?

Due to a **western disturbance**, northern India experienced **fresh snowfall** in Kashmir and widespread rain in Delhi, Rajasthan, Punjab, and Haryana.

Key Points

- **Kashmir's First Snowfall of the Season:**
 - Popular tourist destinations like **Gulmarg, Sonamarg, and Pahalgam**, as well as districts like Bandipora, Baramulla, and Kupwara, reported fresh snowfall.
 - The **India Meteorological Department (IMD)** predicted isolated light rain and snowfall in Jammu and Kashmir.

➤ Rain and Cold Conditions:

- **Incessant rains continued in Delhi** marking the highest December rainfall in 15 years.
- **Light to moderate rainfall** was forecast for **parts of Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Rajasthan**.
 - **Dense fog and rain** in Rajasthan worsened cold conditions and visibility.

Western Disturbances

- Western disturbances are **storms that originate in the Caspian or Mediterranean Sea, and bring non-monsoonal rainfall to northwest India**, according to the **India Meteorological Department (IMD)**.
- They are labelled as an **extra-tropical storm** originating in the Mediterranean, is an area of low pressure that brings sudden showers, snow and fog in northwest India.
- **The meaning of WD lies in its name.**
 - The disturbance travels from the **"western" to the eastern direction**.
 - These travel eastwards on high-altitude **westerly jet streams** - massive ribbons of fast winds traversing the earth from west to east.
 - Disturbance means an **area of "disturbed" or reduced air pressure**.
 - Equilibrium exists in nature due to which the air in a region tries to normalise its pressure.

India Meteorological Department (IMD)

- IMD was **established in 1875**. It is the **National Meteorological Service of the country** and the principal government agency in all matters relating to meteorology and allied subjects.
- It works as an agency of the **Ministry of Earth Sciences**.
- It is **headquartered in New Delhi**.
- IMD is also one of the **six Regional Specialized Meteorological Centres of the World Meteorological Organization**.



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Note:

Key Points

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