



Global Positioning System

For Prelims: Global Positioning System, Standard Positioning Service (SPS), GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System), Atomic clocks, [Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System \(NavIC\)](#), [GPS-Aided Geo Augmented Navigation \(GAGAN\)](#).

For Mains: Global Positioning System, Achievements of Indians in Science & Technology.

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Global Positioning System (GPS) is one of few everyday technologies that have had the kind of revolutionary impact on civilian, military, scientific, and urban realms, redefining our sense of location and impacting diverse sectors globally.

What is the Global Positioning System?

▪ About:

- The GPS, initiated by the U.S. Department of Defense in 1973, comprises three main segments,
 - **Space:** Detailing the space segment, the **24 satellites in six orbits** ensure global coverage, allowing receivers to access signals from at least four satellites simultaneously—a fundamental necessity for accurate positioning.
 - All six orbits are positioned at **an altitude of 20,200 km** above the Earth, and **each orbit has four satellites at all times**. Each satellite completes two orbits in a single day.
 - **Control:** The control segment, managed by ground-based stations, ensures satellite performance and signal accuracy, adhering to the **Standard Positioning Service (SPS)** standards published in 2020. Key stations across the globe manage and monitor the system's integrity.
 - The **SPS standard** tells application developers and users anywhere in **the world what they can expect from the GPS system**.
 - **User:** User segment encompasses diverse sectors from agriculture to military operations, with an estimated 6.5 billion **GNSS (Global Navigation Satellite System)** devices worldwide in 2021, expected to surge to 10 billion by 2031, underscoring its pervasive influence.

▪ Functionality of GPS:

- GPS operates through **satellite-transmitted radio signals** at specific frequencies (L1 and the L2 frequencies at 50 bits/second), received and triangulated by GPS receivers, enabling precise location determination in three dimensions of space and one of time.

▪ Precision and Adjustments:

- Error adjustments, including relativistic effects on satellite clocks and relative velocities, are factored in to enhance accuracy, highlighting the meticulousness of GPS calculations.
- Satellites maintain precise time for GPS by using atomic clocks. These clocks are critical because even tiny timing differences **could lead to substantial location errors**.

Do Other Countries Have GNSS?

- Several countries operate their own Global Navigation Satellite Systems (GNSS) alongside the GPS. Such systems are currently operated by **Australia, China, the European Union (EU), India, Japan, South Korea, Russia, and the U.K.**
 - Of these, Russia's **GLONASS**, the EU's Galileo, and China's BeiDou systems are global.
- India mooted its own Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System in 2006, later rechristened **Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC)**. Its space segment **consists of seven satellites**: three in geostationary orbits and four in geosynchronous orbits.
 - As of May 2023, the minimum number of satellites (four) could facilitate ground-based navigation. The master control facilities are located in Hassan in **Karnataka and Bhopal in Madhya Pradesh**.
 - The NavIC satellites use rubidium atomic clocks and transmit data in the **L5 and the S bands**, with newer satellites also transmitting in the L1 band.
- India also operates the **GPS-Aided Geo Augmented Navigation (GAGAN) system**, which was developed and established by the **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO)** and the Airports Authority of India.
 - GAGAN's primary purpose is "safety-of-life civil aviation applications catering to the Indian airspace" and for providing "correction and integrity messages for GPS".

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Q.1 Which one of the following countries has its own Satellite Navigation System? (2023)

- a. Australia
- b. Canada
- c. Israel
- d. Japan

Ans: d

Exp:

Navigation Systems Operational in the World:

- GPS from the U.S.
- GLONASS from Russia.
- Galileo from European Union
- BeiDou from China.
- NavIC from India
- QZSS from Japan. Hence, option D is correct.

Q.2 With reference to the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS), consider the following statements: (2018)

1. IRNSS has three satellites in geostationary and four satellites in geosynchronous orbits.
2. IRNSS covers entire India and about 5500 sq. Km beyond its borders.
3. India will have its own satellite navigation system with full global coverage by the middle of 2019.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 1 and 2 only
- (c) 2 and 3 only
- (d) None

Ans: (a)

Mains

Q.1 Why is Indian Regional Navigational Satellite System (IRNSS) needed? How does it help in navigation? (2018)

Quest for Simultaneous Elections in India

For Prelims: [Simultaneous elections](#), [Lok Sabha](#), [Model Code of Conduct](#), [Electronic voting machines](#), [Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail Machines](#).

For Mains: Benefits and Challenges Related to Simultaneous Elections Stance of Law Commission on Simultaneous Elections

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

In a move towards electoral reform, the Union Government set the wheels in motion in September 2023 by **forming a six-member panel** tasked with the **mammoth responsibility of exploring the feasibility of [simultaneous elections](#) for the [Lok Sabha](#), [State assemblies](#), and [local bodies](#).**

What are Simultaneous Elections?

▪ About:

- Simultaneous elections refers to the **idea of holding elections for the Lok Sabha (the lower house of Parliament), State legislative assemblies, and local bodies like municipalities and panchayats** across the country at the same time.
- This concept proposes to synchronize the electoral cycles of these different tiers of governance, aiming to conduct all elections together, **ideally once every five years**.

▪ Historical Simultaneous Elections in India: The initial four general elections in India **synchronized Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections**.

- Presently, Lok Sabha elections align with Assembly polls in **Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Arunachal Pradesh, and Sikkim**.

▪ Benefits of Simultaneous Elections:

- **Resource Efficiency:** Conducting [elections](#) at various levels requires significant financial resources. Synchronizing elections would consolidate these expenses, leading to **substantial cost savings for the government**.
- **Optimized Administration:** Simultaneous elections would **streamline the deployment of security forces and administrative staff**, minimizing disruptions caused by election-related duties and allowing officials to focus more consistently on governance and development.
- **Continuity in Policies:** With elections occurring simultaneously, there would be **fewer interruptions in policy implementation due to the [Model Code of Conduct](#)**, ensuring more sustained and consistent governance.
- **Enhanced Voter Turnout:** Reducing the frequency of elections **might combat voter fatigue and increase voter participation**, leading to more representative outcomes and increased legitimacy for elected representatives.
- **Increased Accountability:** When voters cast their ballots for various levels of governance together, **politicians are held accountable for their actions across different tiers**,

fostering a more comprehensive accountability structure.

- **Reduced Polarization:** Simultaneous elections could potentially **diminish the influence of regional, caste-based, or communal politics** by bringing national issues to the forefront, thus encouraging more inclusive campaigning and policy-making.
- **Associated Challenges:**
 - **Constitutional Amendments:** Synchronizing elections requires **amendments to various constitutional articles**.
 - Changes in tenure provisions, dissolution of legislative bodies, and **aligning different election cycles** pose substantial legal challenges.
 - For example, **Articles such as 83(2), 85(2), 172(1), and 174(2)** govern the duration and dissolution of the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, allowing premature dissolution under certain circumstances, which would need repeal for simultaneous elections.

Note

- **Article 85 (1) and 174 (2)** allows the President and the Governor to dissolve the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assembly before the completion of their tenure of five years, under the circumstances mentioned in the Constitution.
- **Article 83(2)** allows the tenure of the Lok Sabha to be extended for one year at a time in case of an Emergency being proclaimed under **Article 352**.
- As of now, after the passage of the **anti-defection law enshrined in the 10th Schedule (52nd Amendment Act, 1985)** and later the Supreme Court judgment in S.R. Bommai case (1994) followed by the High Court judgment in Rameswar Prasad (2006), the decision to dissolve the **State Legislative Assembly** and impose President Rule under Article 356 is subject to judicial review.
 - The Court can revive the Assembly and restore the government if it does not find the grounds of the President's rule to be constitutionally valid as has happened in recent years in the case of **Nagaland, Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh**.
- **Federalism Concerns:** India's federal structure involves multiple states with varying political landscapes.
 - Any move towards simultaneous elections needs **widespread consensus among states**, which **may have differing political agendas**.
 - Also, linking general and local body elections faces hurdles due to local governance being a state subject, **requiring changes in diverse state laws (56 legal provisions from 28 states' Panchayati Raj Acts and Municipal Acts)**.
- **Technology and Infrastructure:** Upgrading technological infrastructure, such as [electronic voting machines \(EVMs\)](#) and [Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail Machines \(VVPATs\)](#), on a large scale poses challenges in procurement, maintenance, and ensuring reliability.
- **By-elections and Legislative Councils:** Synchronizing all elections might **exclude by-elections and elections to legislative councils**, leading to potential gaps in representation and governance.
- **Diverse Political Landscapes:** India's multi-party system involves **diverse political ideologies and regional priorities**.
 - Simultaneous elections may overlook regional issues and dilute the representation of smaller or regional parties.

What is the Stance of Law Commission on Simultaneous Elections?

- The [Law Commission's draft report on Simultaneous Elections](#), released in August 2018, examined the challenges and proposed solutions for conducting simultaneous elections in India.
- **Proposed Framework for Election Synchronization:**
 - **Reducing Election Cycles:** Recommends holding elections twice in five years.
 - **Conducting All Elections in a Calendar Year:** If simultaneous elections are not feasible, propose conducting all elections falling in a calendar year together.
 - **Constructive Vote of No-Confidence Motion:** Recommends **replacing the 'no-confidence motion' with a 'constructive vote of no-confidence'** to ensure confidence

- in an alternate government before ousting the existing one.
- **Hung House Resolution:** Proposes a **process for resolving situations where no party secures a majority to form a government**, involving an opportunity for the largest party/alliance to attempt government formation before midterm elections.
 - **Timely Disqualification:** Suggests **amending anti-defection laws** to ensure the swift resolution of disqualification issues within six months by the presiding officer.
- **In late October 2023**, the panel tasked to check the feasibility of simultaneous elections had an interaction with the Law Commission to discuss the roadmap to synchronize **Parliamentary and Assembly elections by 2029**.

Conclusion

Achieving simultaneous elections in India requires a **measured, consultative approach, balancing the benefits of streamlined governance with the complexities of diverse regional dynamics**. Incremental steps, stakeholder consultations, and adaptable frameworks can pave the way for a synchronized electoral process that respects federal structures while enhancing administrative efficiency.

Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector

For Prelims: [Cooperative sector](#), [Food security](#), [Primary Agricultural Credit Societies \(PACS\)](#), [Agriculture Infrastructure Fund \(AIF\)](#), [Minimum Support Price \(MSP\)](#), [Food Corporation of India](#), [Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshana Abhiyan](#), [Market Intervention Scheme \(MIS\)](#)

For Mains: Government schemes for Agricultural Development, Food Security

Source: [PIB](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the Ministry of Cooperation has shed light on the ["World's Largest Grain Storage Plan in Cooperative Sector."](#)

- This initiative is aimed at addressing the persistent shortage of storage capacity for food grains in the country.

What is the Grain Storage Plan in the Cooperative Sector?

- **Comprehensive Infrastructure Creation:**
 - The project entails establishing various agricultural infrastructures at **Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS)** levels, including warehouses, custom hiring centers, processing units, Fair Price Shops, etc.
 - Convergence of various existing schemes of the Government of India (GoI), such as [Agriculture Infrastructure Fund \(AIF\)](#), [Agricultural Marketing Infrastructure Scheme \(AMI\)](#), [Sub Mission on Agricultural Mechanization \(SMAM\)](#), [Pradhan Mantri Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises Scheme \(PMFME\)](#), [Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana \(PMKSY\)](#) and [Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture \(MIDH\)](#) is a strategic

approach for comprehensive development of the Plan.

▪ **Implementation Partners and Progress:**

- **National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)** with the support of **National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD)**, **Food Corporation of India (FCI)**, etc. is implementing the Pilot Project in different States/ UTs.
 - Construction has commenced in 13 PACS in 13 States/ UTs, with 1,711 PACS identified for inclusion in the pilot project.

▪ **Committees for Implementation Oversight:**

- The Ministry of Cooperation has constituted an **Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC)**, which holds the authority to adopt guidelines and methodologies for scheme convergence.
- Additionally, a **National Level Coordination Committee (NLCC)** with members from relevant ministries and departments is tasked with steering the comprehensive plan's execution and monitoring progress.
 - Further, **State and District Cooperative Development Committees (SCDC and DCDC)** have been constituted at state and district levels to ensure effective coordination and implementation.

▪ **Impact on Farmers:**

- PACS will set up godowns, providing farmers the ability to store produce and access bridge finance for subsequent crop cycles.
 - Option to sell produce at the **farmer's preferred time or sell the entire crop to PACS at Minimum Support Price (MSP)**, preventing distress sales.
 - With decentralized storage capacity at the PACS level, **post-harvest losses are minimized**, ensuring that farmers can maximize their earnings by preserving the quality of their produce.
 - PACS operating as procurement centers and Fair Price Shops (FPS) contribute to **significant cost savings in the transportation of food grains**.
- The plan ensures the **availability of various agricultural inputs and services** at the local **Panchayat** or village level, reducing the dependency on distant procurement centers.
- Farmers are empowered to **diversify their businesses beyond traditional farming activities**, exploring additional sources of income.
- The plan contributes to **national food security** by enhancing storage capacity and reducing wastage, ensuring a more robust and reliable food supply chain.

Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies (PACS)

- PACS are the grassroots level arms of the **short-term co-operative credit structure** headed by the **State Cooperative Banks (SCB) at the state level**.
 - PACS deals directly with rural (agricultural) borrowers, gives those loans, collects repayments of loans given and also undertakes distribution and marketing functions.

What are Initiatives Taken by Ministry of Agriculture to Address Food Grain Shortage?

▪ **Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF):**

- AIF envisages the creation of **post-harvest management infrastructure** and community farming assets through incentives and financial support.
- It includes interest subvention of 3% for a loan up to Rs. 2 Crore per project location for 7 years and reimbursement of credit guarantee fee if the project has credit guarantee cover under **Credit Guarantee Fund Trust for Micro and Small Enterprises (CGTMSE) Scheme**.

▪ **Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA):**

- **PM-AASHA** aims at providing Minimum Support Price (MSP) to farmers for produce of notified oilseeds, pulses & copra.
- It comprises the **Price Support Scheme (PSS)**, **Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS)** and **Private Procurement and Stockist Scheme (PPSS)**.
 - **Price Support Scheme (PSS):**

- Implemented at the request of the concerned State Government.
 - Exempts procured pulses, oilseeds, and copra from mandi tax.
- Central nodal agencies undertake procurement directly from pre-registered farmers at MSP when prices fall below MSP.
- **Price Deficiency Payment Scheme (PDPS):**
 - Involves direct payment of the difference between MSP and the selling/model price.
 - Pre-registered farmers selling oilseeds of prescribed Fair Average Quality (FAQ) norms benefit through a transparent auction process in notified market yards.
- **Private Procurement and Stockist Scheme (PPSS):**
 - States have the option to implement PPSS for oilseed procurement.
 - Procurement is conducted on a pilot basis from pre-registered farmers in selected districts or APMC(s).
- **Market Intervention Scheme (MIS):**
 - **MIS** entails procurement of agricultural and **horticultural commodities** that are perishable and for which MSP is not announced, to protect the growers of these commodities from making distress sales in the event of a bumper crop when prices tend to fall below economic level/cost of production.
- **Bhartiya Beej Sahakari Samiti Limited (BBSSL):**
 - Under the **Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002**, BBSSL has been set up as an Umbrella organization for the cultivation, production and distribution of improved seeds under a single brand name.
 - This Society will increase the availability of improved seeds to the farmers, boost the productivity of crops and enhance the income of the farmers.

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q1. Consider the following statements: (2020)

1. In terms of short-term credit delivery to the agriculture sector, District Central Cooperative Banks (DCCBs) deliver more credit in comparison to Scheduled Commercial Banks and Regional Rural Banks.
2. One of the most important functions of DCCBs is to provide funds to the Primary Agricultural Credit Societies.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

Q2. With reference to 'Urban Cooperative Banks' in India, consider the following statements: (2021)

1. They are supervised and regulated by local boards set up by the State Governments.
2. They can issue equity shares and preference shares.
3. They were brought under the purview of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 through an Amendment in 1966.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only

- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (b)

Mains

Q. In the villages itself no form of credit organisation will be suitable except the cooperative society." – All India Rural Credit Survey. Discuss this statement in the background of agricultural finance in India. What constraints and challenges do financial institutions supplying agricultural finance face? How can technology be used to better reach and serve rural clients? **(2014)**

India Infrastructure Report 2023

For Prelims: [Urban Planning](#), [Urban local bodies](#), [Municipal bonds](#), **India Infrastructure Report**, **Urban Heat Islands**

For Mains: Major Challenges Related to India's Urban Space, Recent Initiatives Related to Urban Development.

Source: [PIB](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the **India Infrastructure Report (IIR) 2023 on [Urban Planning](#) and Development** was released, it is a comprehensive document that covers various aspects of infrastructure planning, finance and governance in the country.

- The IIR 2023 has been a collaborative effort of the **IDFC Foundation, Infrastructure Development Corporation (Karnataka) Ltd. (iDeCK)** and the [National Institute of Urban Affairs \(NIUA\)](#).

Note

- **IDFC Foundation is a non-profit organization** that supports social infrastructure, research, and advocacy in India
 - It publishes reports and papers that offer new insights and solutions for infrastructure development.
- **iDeCK is a joint venture of the Government of Karnataka, IDFC Foundation and HDFC** that **works on sustainable infrastructure projects**. It supports research and capacity building activities through IDFC Foundation and ICAP Trust.

What are the Key Highlights of the India Infrastructure Report?

- **Thematic Focus on Urban Challenges:**

- The IIR systematically addresses key themes that are central to India's urban challenges.
 - These include **planning and governance, smart initiatives, [public-private partnerships \(PPPs\)](#) and **financing, housing and migration**, public service delivery, integrating infrastructure, and urban redevelopment.**
- **Critique of Planning Mechanism:**
 - Criticizes existing planning mechanisms, particularly restrictions on building construction, for rendering cities **"unlivable" and contributing to the emergence of slums.**
 - Highlights the role of poor planning as a major factor in urban challenges.
- **Low Floor Space Indices (FSIs) and Urban Sprawl:**
 - Underscores the impact of **low floor space indices (FSIs) or floor area ratios (FARs)** on high-density development and **urban sprawl** (rapid expansion of cities and towns into undeveloped land).
 - A **low Floor Space Index (FSI)** means that a smaller area of a plot will be developed. It's a parameter used in urban planning to **determine the maximum allowable construction density on a plot of land.**
 - Links low **FSI to the creation of slums**, with a focus on planning errors leading to forced high population density.
 - The report advocates for cities to adopt a redevelopment policy, emphasizing the recovery of land from private owners in exchange for **higher floor space indices (FSIs) and improved road connectivity.**
 - Advocates for dynamic city building, stressing that the carrying capacity needs to increase in tandem with the growth of cities.
- **Financial Management of Urban Local Bodies:**
 - Highlights the report's analysis of the financial management of **[urban local bodies](#)**, emphasizing the urgent need for financial sustainability.
 - Report advocates for PPPs and **[municipal bonds](#)** as essential tools for financing urban development projects.
 - The report noted that while India has led in PPPs, especially in roads, ports, airports and energy, **few PPPs have happened in the urban sector.**

India Infrastructure Report (IIR)

- The IIR 2023 **contains 25 chapters** by prominent names in the urban development and policy ecosystem on the current state of urban development in India.
- This **annual publication** has been instrumental in identifying and analyzing legal, fiscal, regulatory, technological, social, and conceptual aspects related to contemporary themes relevant to infrastructure development.
- This makes it an **invaluable resource for those involved in formulating urban policy**, as well as for those interested in the development of India's infrastructure and urbanization, such as policymakers, investors, academics, financiers, and multilateral agencies.

What is the Current Urban Landscape in India?

- India is one of the fastest-growing economies in the world, and its growth is propelled by its cities.
 - Cities contribute **66% to the [national GDP](#)**, a number expected to rise to **80% by 2050.**
- Urbanization has been relatively slow in India, with the share of the population living in officially classified urban settlements growing at a **rate of just over 1.15% a year from 2001-2011.**
- India's seven largest metropolitan areas are Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad, and Ahmedabad.

What are the Initiatives Related to Urban Development?

- **[Smart Cities](#)**
- **[Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban](#)**
- **[HRIDAY](#)**
- **[Aspirational district programm.](#)**

- [Atal Mission for Urban Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation \(AMRUT\)](#)
- [Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban \(PMAY-U\)](#)
- [Climate Smart Cities Assessment Framework 2.0](#)
- [TULIP-The Urban Learning Internship Program](#)
- [Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan \(Self-Reliant India\)](#)

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year's Question (PYQs)

Mains

Q. The frequency of urban floods due to high intensity rainfall is increasing over the years. Discussing the reasons for urban floods, highlight the mechanisms for preparedness to reduce the risk during such events. (2016)

UNESCO Recognition to Gujarat's Garba Dance

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the [United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization \(UNESCO\)](#), during its 18th session of the Intergovernmental Committee in Botswana, officially added **Gujarat's iconic Garba dance** to its esteemed **Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) of Humanity**.

- The Garba dance form is the **15th cultural item from India to make it to the UNESCO list**. [Kolkata's Durga Puja](#) was the last one added in 2021.

What is the Garba Dance?

- Garba is a form of **Gujarati folk dance** that is performed during the **nine-day Hindu festival of Navratri**, which celebrates the victory of good over evil.
 - The name Garba comes from the **Sanskrit word for womb**, implying life and creation.
- Garba dances celebrate **fertility, honor womanhood, and pay respect to any of an array of mother goddesses**.
 - The dance also customarily marks a girl's first menstrual cycle and, later, her imminent marriage.
- The dance is performed around a **centrally lit lamp or a picture or statue of the Goddess Shakti**, who represents the feminine energy of the universe.
- Garba is accompanied by rhythmic music, singing, and clapping. The dance can be performed by anyone, regardless of age, gender, or social status.
- Modern Garba is heavily influenced by **Dandiya Raas**, a dance traditionally performed by men. The merger of these two dances has formed the high-energy Garba dance that is seen today.
- Garba fosters **social equality by diluting socio-economic, gender, and rigid sect structures**.
 - It continues to be inclusive and participative by diverse and marginalized communities, strengthening community bonds.

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What is UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)?

▪ About:

- UNESCO ICH is a term that refers to the practices, representations, expressions, knowledge, skills, and cultural spaces that are recognized as part of the cultural heritage of a community, group, or individual.
- UNESCO defines ICH as “the mainspring of humanity’s cultural diversity and its maintenance a guarantee for continuing creativity.”
- In 2003, UNESCO adopted the Convention for the **Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH)**, signifying a commitment to protect, promote, and transmit the diverse expressions of human culture.
- The convention establishes two crucial lists for ICH.
 - **Representative List:** Showcasing the global diversity of ICH, this list raises awareness of its significance and importance.
 - **Urgent Safeguarding List:** Identifying threatened ICH, this list calls for immediate measures to ensure its survival.

▪ Examples of ICH:

- Languages, oral traditions, literature, and poetry.
- Performing arts, such as music, dance, and theatre.
- Social practices, rituals, and festive events.
- Knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe.
- Traditional craftsmanship, such as pottery, weaving, and metalwork.

▪ Existing UNESCO's ICH list of India:

Existing Traditions of India Recognised by UNESCO	
1. Tradition of Vedic chanting, 2008	8. Buddhist chanting of Ladakh: recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir, India, 2012
2. Ramlila, the traditional performance of the Ramayana, 2008	9. Sankirtana, ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur, 2013
3. Kutiyattam, Sanskrit theatre, 2008	10. Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab, India ,2014
4. Ramman, religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas, India, 2009	11. Yoga, 2016
5. Mudi yettu, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala, 2010	12. Nowruz, 2016
6. Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan, 2010	13. Kumbh Mela, 2017
7. Chhau dance, 2010	14. Durga Puja in Kolkata, 2021
	15. Garba Dance of Gujarat, 2023

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Mains

Q.1 Safeguarding the Indian Art Heritage is the need of the moment. Discuss. (2018)

NGT's Intervention in Haryana's Illegal Mining Issue

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

The [National Green Tribunal \(NGT\)](#) has recently taken stringent action against the state of Haryana for its **failure to address [illegal mining concerns in Gurgaon's Rithoj village](#)**.

What is Illegal Mining?

- **About:** Illegal mining is the **extraction of minerals, ores, or other valuable resources from land or water bodies** without the necessary permits, licenses, or regulatory approvals from government authorities.
 - It can also involve the violation of environmental, labor, and safety standards.
- **Laws Related to Mining in India:**
 - The entry at serial No. 23 of **List II (State List)** to the Constitution of India mandates the state government to own the **minerals located within their boundaries**.
 - The entry at serial No. 54 of **List I (Central List)** mandates the central government to own the minerals within the **[exclusive economic zone of India \(EEZ\)](#)**.
 - In pursuance to this **[Mines & Minerals \(Development and Regulation\) \(MMDR\) Act of 1957](#)** was framed.
 - The power to frame **policy and legislation relating to minor minerals is entirely delegated to the State Governments** while policy and legislation relating to the **major minerals are dealt by the Ministry of Mines under the Union Government**.

What is the National Green Tribunal?

- **Foundation:** The NGT was established in **October, 2010**, under the **National Green Tribunal Act 2010**.
 - Its primary focus is to facilitate the swift and efficient resolution of cases related to **environmental protection, conservation of forests, and preservation of natural resources**.
 - Currently, **New Delhi** serves as the principal place of sitting of NGT, with **Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata, and Chennai** designated as the other four places of sitting for the Tribunal.
- **Structure:**
 - The Tribunal is headed by the **Chairperson who sits in the Principal Bench** and has at least 10 but not more than 20 judicial members and expert members.

- The Chairperson is appointed by the Central Government in consultation with the **Chief Justice of India (CJI)**.
- A Selection Committee shall be formed by the central government to appoint the Judicial Members and Expert Members.
- **Legal Mandate:** The Tribunal's jurisdiction **extends to enforcing environmental rights, granting relief and compensation for damages to individuals and property**, and addressing matters associated with environmental protection and conservation.
 - It operates independently of the **procedural rules laid down in the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908**, guided instead by principles of natural justice.
 - Any person seeking relief and compensation for environmental damage involving subjects in the legislations mentioned in **Schedule I of the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010** may approach the Tribunal. **The statutes in Schedule I are:**
 - **The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974**
 - **The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Cess Act, 1977**
 - **The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980**
 - **The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981**
 - **The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986**
 - **The Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991**
 - **The Biological Diversity Act, 2002**

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. How is the National Green Tribunal (NGT) different from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB)? (2018)

1. The NGT has been established by an Act whereas the CPCB has been created by an executive order of the Government.
2. The NGT provides environmental justice and helps reduce the burden of litigation in the higher courts whereas the CPCB promotes cleanliness of streams and wells, and aims to improve the quality of air in the country.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

Ans: (b)

Q. The National Green Tribunal Act, 2010 was enacted in consonance with which of the following provisions of the Constitution of India? (2012)

1. Right to healthy environment, construed as a part of Right to life under Article 21
2. Provision of grants for raising the level of administration in the Scheduled Areas for the welfare of Scheduled Tribes under Article 275(1)
3. Powers and functions of Gram Sabha as mentioned under Article 243(A)

Select the correct answer using the codes given below:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) 1, 2 and 3

Ans: (a)

Mains

Q. Despite India being one of the countries of Gondwanaland, its mining industry contributes much less to its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in percentage. Discuss. (2021)

Q. "In spite of adverse environmental impact, coal mining is still inevitable for development". Discuss. (2017)

Supreme Court Notice on Birth Registration

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

The [Supreme Court](#) has issued notice to the Union government related to a petition seeking the effective implementation and full realization of the object and purpose of the [Registration of Births and Deaths \(RBD\) Act, 1969](#).

- The petition highlights **birth registration as a fundamental right** that has been recognised in various international conventions as well as in the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) and its significance in establishing individual legal identities.

What are the Major Provisions Related to Registration of Births in India?

- **Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969:**
 - **Registrar Appointments:** Registrars are appointed for local areas under **Section 7 of the RBD Act, 1969** to oversee the registration of births within their jurisdictional area.
 - These registrars can be individuals **affiliated with various entities like municipalities, Panchayats, government health institutions**, or other local authorities designated by the State Government.
 - **Institutional Responsibilities:** Under the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969, institutions such as **hospitals, health centers, maternity or nursing homes are responsible for reporting births** occurring within their premises to the registrar.
 - **Citizen's Obligations:** In the case of births, citizens are required to inform the **registrar within 21 days of the event occurring in their jurisdiction**.
- **Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Act, 2023:** It paved way for [digital birth certificates](#) which will be a single document to be used for admission to educational institutions, applications for driving license, government jobs, passports or Aadhaar, voter enrolment, and registration of marriage, among others
 - It will be compulsory for States to register births and deaths on the **Centre's Civil Registration System (CRS)** portal and share data with the [Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India \(RGI\)](#) which functions under the Union Home Ministry.

What is the Previous Stance of the Supreme Court over Birth Registration?

- The previous Supreme Court interventions, including a **2011 judgment in the Committee for Legal Aid to Poor v. Union of India case** and the **2016 Voluntary Health Association of Punjab v. Union of India case**, emphasized the **importance of birth registration** and the alarming consequences of sex-selective abortions on sex ratios.
- Despite court directives to create a **centralized database for civil registration records**, the **authorities have allegedly failed to adhere to the orders**, leading to inadequate data availability hindering transparency and research.

International Civil Aviation Day 2023

International Civil Aviation Day (ICAD) is celebrated annually on **7th December**. The day was established in 1994 as part of the 50th anniversary of the [International Civil Aviation Organization \(ICAO\)](#).

- The [United Nations General Assembly](#) officially recognized the day in 1996.
- The purpose of ICAD is to promote global recognition of international civil aviation's **vital role in the social and economic development of nations**.
 - It underscores ICAO's unique position in **fostering cooperation among states** to establish an inclusive and efficient global transit network for the benefit of humanity.
- **Theme for 2023: “Advancing Innovation for Global Aviation Development”**.
- The ICAO is a United Nations agency that coordinates **international air navigation**. It was established in **1944** to manage the Convention on [International Civil Aviation \(Chicago Convention\)](#).
 - **India is a member of ICAO**, it is headquartered in Montreal, Canada.

Read more: [International Civil Aviation Organisation](#)

Google Unveils Project Gemini

[Google](#) has introduced **project Gemini**, an [artificial intelligence \(AI\) model](#) designed to **exhibit human-like behavior**.

- This development is expected to fuel the ongoing AI race and raise debates about the [potential benefits and risks of the technology](#).
- Gemini aims to enhance **Google's AI-powered chatbot Bard's** intuitiveness and efficiency in tasks, particularly those involving planning.
- Google DeepMind, the AI division behind Gemini, emphasizes the model's **problem-solving skills in math and physics**, offering potential scientific breakthroughs.
- Concerns exist regarding the potential impact of AI on **job displacement, misinformation amplification, and even triggering destructive behavior**.

Read more: [Artificial Intelligence](#)

Implementing

The Minister of Women and Child Development, in a written reply in Rajya Sabha, has given the information about '[Mission Shakti](#)'- an integrated women empowerment programme as umbrella scheme for the safety, security and empowerment of women for implementation during the [15th Finance Commission](#).

- 'Mission Shakti' comprises of **two sub-schemes 'Sambal'** and **'Samarthya'** for safety and security of women and empowerment of women respectively.
- The schemes of [One Stop Centres \(OSC\)](#), **Women Helplines (181-WHL)**, [Beti Bachao Beti Padhao \(BBBP\)](#) and **Nari Adalat** are part of 'Sambal' sub- scheme.
- The components of [Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana \(PMMVY\)](#), **Palna, Shakti Sadan, Sakhi Niwas and Hub for Empowerment of Women** are part of 'Samarthya' sub scheme.
- The Government has decided to implement the component of **"Nari Adalat"** in a phased manner under Mission Shakti. **In the first phase**, the State of Assam and the [Union Territory \(UT\) of Jammu & Kashmir](#) have been selected by the Ministry to implement the component of Nari Adalat.

Read More: [Sexual Harassment at Workplace](#), [Ujjwala](#)

South Eastern Coalfields Ltd to Use “Miyawaki” Plantation Method

In a bid to boost forest cover in **Chhattisgarh**, in and around the **Gevra mine**, the largest coal mine of the country, **South Eastern Coalfields Ltd (SECL)** will undertake plantation using the [Miyawaki method](#) for the first time in its operational areas.

- The Miyawaki method of plantation was pioneered in the 1970s in Japan. This technique of plantation involves planting **native trees, shrubs and groundcover plants** within every square metre. This method is ideal for small parcels of land and creates dense canopy layer of tall trees.
- The species chosen for Miyawaki plantation is **typically of plants which do not require a lot of maintenance and can survive harsh weather and water-scarce conditions** and grow rapidly in existing conditions yielding thick pockets of green cover.

Read More: [Urban Forests](#), [Climate Change](#)

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