



Sri Sri Auniati Satra Vaishnavite Monastery

For Prelims: Sri Sri Auniati Satra Vaishnavite Monastery, Majuli Island, Assamese Vaishnavism, Bhakti Movement, Wetlands.

For Mains: Sri Sri Auniati Satra Vaishnavite Monastery, Salient features of Indian Society.

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

Sri Sri Auniati Satra is a more than 350-year-old **Vaishnavite** monastery in Assam's Majuli district.

What are the Key Facts about Sri Sri Auniati Satra Vaishnavite Monastery?

- **Establishment:**
 - The Sri Sri Auniati Satra was established in the year 1653 in Majuli, Assam. It has a history of over 350 years, making it **one of the oldest Satras** in the region.
 - A Satra is an **institutional centre for Assamese Vaishnavism**, a bhakti movement that emerged in the **15th century**.
 - The Satra is located in Majuli, which is the **largest inhabited river island in the world**. Majuli is situated in the Brahmaputra River in the northeastern state of Assam, India.
- **Religious Significance:**
 - The Satra is a **center of Assamese Vaishnavism**, a bhakti movement that revolves around the worship of Lord Krishna.
 - The original idol of **Lord Krishna in the form of Govinda** is said to have been brought from the Lord Jagannath Temple at Puri.
- **Cultural Heritage:**
 - **Vaishnavite monasteries like Auniati Satra** are not only places of worship but **also centers for the preservation of traditional art forms, literature, and cultural practices**. These Satras **play a crucial role in promoting and sustaining the cultural heritage** of the region.
 - Vaishnavite Satras traditionally serve as centres for learning and spiritual activities. Monks and disciples engage in **religious studies, meditation, and community service**.
- **Bhaona and Traditional Art Forms:**
 - **Bhaona, a traditional art form, is practiced at the Satra**. It is a combination of acting, music, and musical instruments.
 - Bhaona is a significant performing art form that aims to **convey religious messages to villagers through entertainment**.
 - The main drama is usually preceded by a **musical performance called the Gayan-Bayan**.

What are the Key Facts Related to Majuli Island?

- Majuli is a river island located in the Brahmaputra River in the northeastern state of Assam, India. It is recognized as the largest river island in the world.

- The island is a result of the dynamics of the Brahmaputra River system, characterized by the shifting courses and channels of the river.
- The island is surrounded by the Brahmaputra River and its tributaries, creating a unique fluvial landform. **Wetlands known as Beels and Chaporis (islets)** contribute to the ecological diversity of the region.

What is Vaishnavism?

- **About:**
 - Vaishnavism is a **prominent bhakti (devotional) movement within Hinduism**, and it emphasises deep devotion and love towards the god Vishnu and his various incarnations.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Devotion to Vishnu:** The central focus of Vaishnavism is devotion (bhakti) to Vishnu, who is considered the Supreme Being and the sustainer of the universe. Vaishnavas believe in a personal relationship with Vishnu, expressing love, reverence, and devotion toward the deity.
 - Vishnu is believed to have incarnated on Earth in various forms known as avatars to restore cosmic order and righteousness. The ten primary avatars are collectively known as the Dashavatara, with popular incarnations including Rama and Krishna.
 - **Dashavatara:** The ten avatars of Vishnu are Matsya (fish), Kurma (turtle), Varaha (boar), Narasimha (half-man, half-lion), Vamana (dwarf), Parashurama (the warrior with an axe), Rama (the prince of Ayodhya), Krishna (the divine cowherd), Buddha (the enlightened one), and Kalki (the future warrior on a white horse).
 - **Bhakti and Liberation:** Vaishnavism places a strong **emphasis on the path of bhakti**, which involves **intense devotion and love toward Vishnu**. The ultimate goal for many Vaishnavas is liberation (moksha) from the **cycle of birth and death (samsara)** and union with Vishnu.
 - **Variety of Sects:** Vaishnavism encompasses a variety of sects and groups with different interpretations of the relationship between the individual soul (jiva) and God. Some sects emphasise **qualified nondualism (vishishtadvaita)**, while others subscribe to **dualism (dvaita) or pure nondualism (shuddhadvaita)**.
 - **Srivaishnava Sect:** Emphasises qualified nondualism based on the teachings of Ramanuja.
 - **Madhva Sect:** Professes dualism, asserting the separate existence of God and the soul, following the philosophy of Madhva.
 - **Pushtimarg Sect:** Maintains pure nondualism according to Vallabhacharya's teachings.
 - **Gaudiya Sect:** Founded by Chaitanya, teaches inconceivable duality and nonduality.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims:

Q. The world's second tallest statue in sitting pose of Ramanuja was inaugurated by the Prime Minister of India at Hyderabad recently. Which one of the following statements correctly represents the teachings of Ramanuja? (2022)

- (a) The best means of salvation was devotion.
- (b) Vedas are eternal, self-existent and wholly authoritative.
- (c) Logical arguments were essential means for the highest bliss.
- (d) Salvation was to be obtained through meditation.

Ans: (a)

- Ramanuja, born in Tamil Nadu in the 11th century was deeply influenced by the Alvars (Vishnu

worshippers). According to him the best means of attaining salvation was through intense devotion to Vishnu. Vishnu in His grace helps the devotee to attain the bliss of union with Him. He propounded the doctrine of Vishishtadvaita or qualified oneness in that the soul even when united with the Supreme God remained distinct.

- Ramanuja's doctrine greatly inspired the new strand of bhakti which developed in north India subsequently.
- Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer.

Mains:

Q. Evaluate the nature of Bhakti Literature and its contribution to Indian culture. (2021)

Demand for Advanced Driver Assistance Systems

For Prelims: Advanced Driver Assistance Systems, [Autonomous Driving](#)

For Mains: Landscape of Self-Driving Cars in India, Automation of Transport and challenges

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

As [autonomous driving gains momentum globally](#), India emerges as a surprising yet significant market, with a surge in demand for **Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS)**.

What is Advanced Driver Assistance Systems (ADAS)?

▪ About:

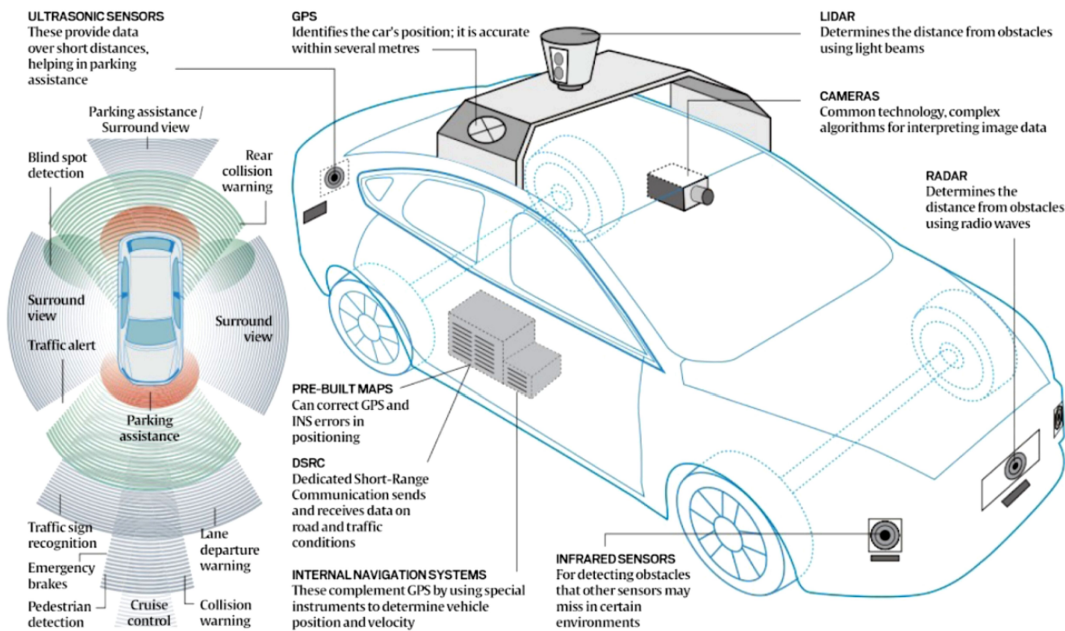
- Advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) can be defined as in **vehicle digital technologies** that help drivers in routine navigation and parking without fully automating the entire process but instead **leveraging computer networks** to enable more data-driven and safer driving experiences.
 - ADAS systems use sensors, cameras, and radar to monitor the environment around a vehicle.
 - They can provide active safety information, driving interventions, and assistance with parking.
- The goal of ADAS is to **reduce the incidence and severity of automotive accidents** that cannot be avoided so that deaths and injuries can be prevented.
 - These devices can give important data about traffic, road closures and blockages, congestion levels, advised routes to avoid traffic, etc.

▪ Popular ADAS Features:

- The ADAS suite includes features such as **automatic emergency braking**, forward collision warning, **blind spot collision warning**, lane-keeping assist, **adaptive cruise control**, and more.

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HOW AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES SEE AND HEAR



▪ Reasons for Surge in Demand in India:

◦ Progressive Democratization:

- India is witnessing a progressive democratization of autonomous driving tools. Car manufacturers are increasingly offering **ADAS as standard features on mid-segment vehicles**, contributing to the heightened demand for advanced driver assistance technology.

◦ Road Safety Concerns:

- Despite India's infamous road conditions and traffic patterns, there is a growing emphasis on road safety. Car manufacturers are integrating ADAS features to **enhance safety and provide consumers with advanced driver assistance tools**.

▪ Challenges in India for ADAS Systems:

◦ Road Infrastructure Challenges:

- India is considered **one of the most challenging driving environments globally**.
 - The country has the **world's deadliest roads**, with crashes killing and maiming over **800,000 people annually, according to the World Bank**.
- India's diverse road conditions, from **well-maintained highways to poorly constructed rural roads**, pose challenges for ADAS systems for consistent road markings and infrastructure.

◦ Diverse Road Users:

- Indian roads host a mix of pedestrians, cyclists, and non-motorized vehicles alongside motor vehicles, creating complexity for ADAS adaptation.
 - A study by the **World Resources Institute (WRI) India** revealed that **nearly 50% of urban trips in India are made on foot, bicycle, or cycle-rickshaw**, emphasizing the **importance of considering non-motorized road users in ADAS design**.

◦ Connectivity and Data:

- ADAS systems require **real-time data updates and reliable connectivity**, which might be an issue in remote or poorly networked areas of India.

◦ Vulnerable to Hacking:

- One major concern consumers and experts have about ADAS Systems is their **vulnerability to cyberattacks**.
 - Hacked vehicles are extremely dangerous and might lead to accidents.

◦ Driver Behaviour:

- ADAS systems' success relies on responsible driving behaviour. A survey by the **Institute of Road Traffic Education (IRTE) in India** found that **only 44% of**

drivers were aware of ADAS technology, highlighting the need for widespread education on its benefits and usage.

What is Autonomous Driving?

▪ About:

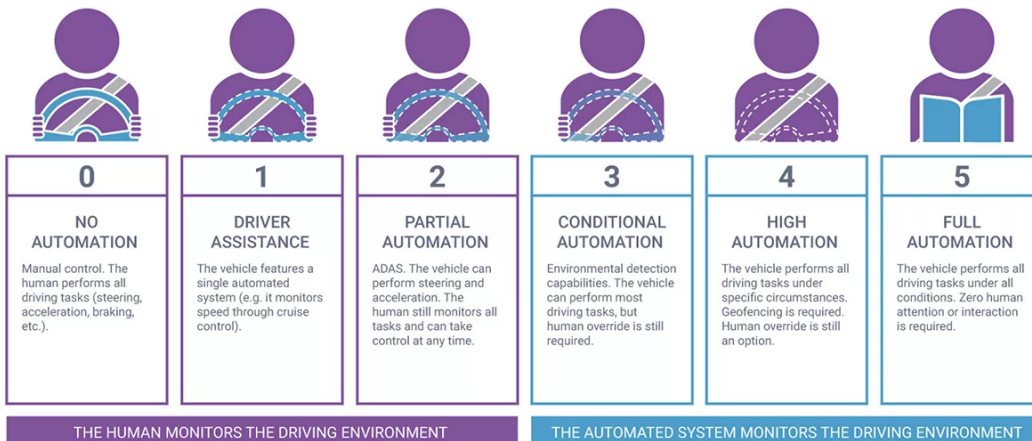
- Autonomous driving is the **ability of a car to drive itself with limited or no human intervention**. Autonomous vehicles are equipped with technologies like ADAS that can sense their surroundings and adjust their speed and course without human input.
 - **Autonomous driving can also refer to self-driving vehicles.**

▪ Levels of Autonomous Driving:

- The **Society of Automotive Engineers (SAE)** defines 6 levels of driving automation ranging from 0 (fully manual) to 5 (fully autonomous).
- Car manufacturers in India are currently focusing on offering **Level 2 functionality**.
 - Despite the increasing adoption of ADAS, Level 2 seems to be the current limit for most carmakers. **Full autonomous driving (Level 5) remains a distant goal**, with challenges ranging from technical limitations to regulatory concerns.

SYNOPSIS®

LEVELS OF DRIVING AUTOMATION



UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. With the present state of development, Artificial Intelligence can effectively do which of the following? (2020)

1. Bring down electricity consumption in industrial units
2. Create meaningful short stories and songs
3. Disease diagnosis
4. Text-to-Speech Conversion
5. Wireless transmission of electrical energy

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2, 3 and 5 only
(b) 1, 3 and 4 only
(c) 2, 4 and 5 only

(d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Ans: (b)

India's Geographical Indication Landscape

For Prelims: [Geographical Indication \(GI\) Tag](#), [World Trade Organisation \(WTO\)](#), GI Act, 1999

For Mains: Intellectual Property Rights, Protection of Traditional Knowledge

Source: DTE

Why in News?

India's [Geographical Indication \(GI\) tags](#) journey of over two decades faces challenges, with limited outcomes indicating the **need for reforms in the registration processes**.

What is the Geographical Indication (GI)?

▪ About:

- A geographical indication (GI) is a designation applied to products originating from a specific geographical area, indicating that the qualities or reputation of the products are inherently linked to that particular origin.
- Article 22 (1) of [Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights \(TRIPS\)](#) defines **GIs as “indications which identify a good as originating in the territory of a member, or a region or locality in that territory, where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to its geographic origin”**.
 - In many EU nations, GI is classified in two basic categories **Protected GI (PGI)** and **Protected Destination of Origin (PDO)**. **India only has the PGI category.**
- This certification is also extended to **non-agricultural products**, such as **handicrafts** based on human skills, materials and resources available in certain areas that make the product unique.
- GI is a powerful tool for **protecting traditional knowledge**, culture and can boost socio-economic development.

▪ Legal Framework and Governance:

- GI is governed under the **Agreement on TRIPS** at the [World Trade Organisation \(WTO\)](#).
- The **Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999** seeks to provide for the registration and better protection of geographical indications relating to goods in India.
- [Paris Convention](#) emphasises **protecting industrial property and geographical indications in Articles 1(2) and 10**.

▪ Status of GI Tags Registration:

- Compared to other nations, **India lags in GI registration**. Till December 2023, **Intellectual Property India** received just 1,167 applications, of which **only 547 products have been registered**, as per the GI Registry.
- **Germany leads in GI registrations**, with 15,566 registered products, **followed by China (7,247)**, as per 2020 data with the [World Intellectual Property Organization](#).
- **Globally, wines and spirits comprise 51.8% of registered GIs**, followed by

agricultural products and foodstuffs at 29.9%.

- In **India, handicraft (about 45%) and agriculture (about 30%)** comprise the majority of the GI products.

▪ **Concerns Regarding the GI Tags in India:**

◦ **Concerns with GI Act and Registration Process:**

- The **GI Act, 1999** framed over two decades ago, requires timely amendments to address current challenges.
- **Registration forms and application processing times** need simplification for easier compliance.
 - The current application acceptance ratio is only about 46% in India.
- Lack of **suitable institutional development** hampers effective implementation of GI protection mechanisms.
- Producers often struggle **post-GI registration due to a lack of guidance and support.**

◦ **Ambiguity in Producers' Definition:**

- The lack of clarity in **defining "producers" in the GI Act of 1999** leads to the involvement of intermediaries.
 - Intermediaries benefit from GIs, diluting the intended advantages for genuine producers.

◦ **Disputes at the International Level:**

- Disputes, especially regarding products like [Darjeeling tea](#) and [Basmati rice](#), indicate that GIs receive less attention compared to patents, trademarks, and copyrights.

◦ **Academic Attention:**

- **Limited academic focus on GIs is evident**, with only seven publications from India.
 - A recent surge in publications indicates growing academic interest, with 35 articles published in 2021.
- **European nations**, such as Italy, Spain, and France, lead in GI-related academic publications.

What Can be Done to Realise the Potential of GI-based Products?

- Government initiatives should **incentivize producers at the grassroots level** to boost GI numbers.
 - Laws should **exclude "non-producers" from benefiting**, ensuring direct benefits to genuine producers.
- Technology, skill-building, and **digital literacy among GI stakeholders** are crucial for modernization.
- Government agencies should collaborate with trade associations to organize exhibitions and promote GI-based products through various media.
- Indian **embassies** should actively promote GI-based products to encourage growth in the **foreign market**.
 - Favourable international tariff regimes and special attention to GI products at WTO can boost global presence.
- **Integrating GIs with the [One District One Product scheme](#)** can enhance promotion and market reach.
 - Developing market outlet schemes, especially **rural markets** (gramin haats), can boost GI product visibility.
- Establishing testing laboratories at marketplaces is essential to **ensure consumer faith in the quality of GI products.**
- Aligning startups with GIs and linking their performance with [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) can contribute to social development.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Years Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Which of the following has/have been accorded 'Geographical Indication' status? (2015)

1. Banaras Brocades and Sarees
2. Rajasthani Daal-Bati-Churma
3. Tirupathi Laddu

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans: (c)

Q. India enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 in order to comply with the obligations to (2018)

- (a) ILO
(b) IMF
(c) UNCTAD
(d) WTO

Ans: (d)

Mains:

Q. How is the Government of India protecting traditional knowledge of medicine from patenting by pharmaceutical companies? (2019)

Growing Concern of Childhood Cancers in India

For Prelims: [Indian Council of Medical Research](#), [Cancer](#), Types of Cancer, [National Cancer Grid](#), [National Cancer Awareness Day](#)

For Mains: Cancer Prevention, Childhood cancer in India, Initiatives undertaken for control of cancer.

Source: DTE

Why in News?

Childhood cancers are emerging as a significant **public health concern in India**, with a notable percentage of cancer patients falling under the age of 15.

- A recently published study in the ***India Pediatric Journal*** sheds light on the prevalence, types, and challenges associated with pediatric cancers in the country.

What are the Key Highlights of the Study?

- **Study Details and Dataset:**
 - The study is based on the largest dataset on childhood cancers in India; from [National Cancer Registry Programme \(NCRP\)](#).
 - The NCRP was established by the [Indian Council of Medical Research in 1981](#).
- **Cancer Cases in India (2012-2019):**
 - India reported 1,332,207 cancer cases between 2012 and 2019.
 - Approximately 3.2% and 4.6% of these cases were in the age groups 0-14 years and 0-19 years, respectively.
 - Over 3% of all cancer patients in India are under 15; 4.6% under 20.
 - Leukaemias constitute a substantial burden, comprising nearly half of all cancers in the 0-4 and 5-9 age groups (42.1% and 42.5%, respectively).
- **Distribution of Cancers in Different Age Groups:**
 - Childhood cancers are divided into two age groups of 0-14 and 0-19 years based on the International Classification of Childhood Cancer's third edition.
 - For the 0-19 year age group, the leading cancers are leukaemia (36%), lymphoma (12%), bone (11%), and central nervous system tumour (10%).
 - The four leading groups of cancers among the 0-14 year age group were leukaemia (40%), lymphoma (12%), central nervous system (CNS) tumours (11%) and bone cancer (8%).
- **Non-Hodgkin Lymphomas and Gender Differences:**
 - Non-Hodgkin lymphomas show an increase with age, particularly in males, associated with hormonal and biological changes.
 - Malignant bone tumours affect more girls due to earlier skeletal maturity, as highlighted by the study.
- **Gender Disparities and Social Determinants:**
 - A higher proportion of male children are diagnosed with cancer, attributed to male birth preferences and gender discrimination.
 - The sex disparity in the cancer registry mirrors data reported in low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) and was attributed to low female literacy rates.
 - LMICs report 90% of the global cancer cases burden, but are awarded less than 0.1% funding for paediatric cancer research.
- **Challenges in CNS Tumor Registration in India:**
 - CNS tumors in India may be treated in neurosurgical centers in multispecialty (general) hospitals rather than dedicated cancer centers.
 - The NCRP currently only registers 'malignant' (defined as [World Health Organization](#) Grade 3 and 4) CNS tumors.
- **Global Disparities in Cancer Types:**
 - The proportion of leukaemias and bone cancers appears higher globally compared to India, as revealed by a study in The Lancet Oncology (2017).
 - The international distribution of CNS tumors (17-26%) is also greater than what's observed in India.

Key Terms

- **Cancer:**
 - It is a complex and broad term used to describe a group of diseases characterised by the **uncontrolled growth and spread of abnormal cells** in the body.
 - These **abnormal cells, known as cancer cells**, have the ability to invade and destroy healthy tissues and organs.
 - In a healthy body, **cells grow, divide, and die in a regulated manner**, allowing for the normal functioning of tissues and organs.
 - However, in the case of cancer, certain genetic mutations or abnormalities disrupt this normal cell cycle, causing cells to divide and grow uncontrollably.
- **Leukaemia:**
 - Leukaemias are cancers of the white blood cells, which begin in the bone marrow.
 - Leukaemia is cancer of the body's blood-forming tissues, including the bone marrow and the lymphatic system.
 - The lymphatic system is a network of vessels, tissues, and organs that helps maintain fluid balance in the body.

▪ **Lymphomas:**

- Lymphoma is a broad term for **cancer that begins in cells of the lymph system.**
 - There are two main types of lymphoma: Hodgkin lymphoma(Hodgkin disease) and non-Hodgkin lymphoma (NHL).
 - Hodgkin lymphoma can often be cured. The prognosis of NHL depends on the specific type.
- Both leukaemia and lymphomas originate in lymphocytes. However, leukaemia typically originates in bone marrow and spreads through the bloodstream, while lymphoma usually originates in lymph nodes or the spleen and spreads through the lymphatic system.

▪ **Bone Cancer:**

- It is caused when **unusual cells grow out of control in bone.** It destroys normal bone tissue.
- This variety of bone cancer occurs most often in children and young adults, in the bones of the leg or arm.

▪ **Central Nervous system (CNS) Tumours:**

- This tumour occurs when abnormal cells form in the brain or spinal cord.
- A CNS tumour can be either cancerous or benign. Both types need medical care.
 - A cancerous tumour is **malignant, meaning it can grow fast and spread to other parts of the body.**
 - A benign tumour means the tumour will often grow more slowly and will not spread to other parts of the body.

What are India's Initiatives Related to Cancer Treatment?

- [National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke](#)
- [National Cancer Grid](#)
- [National Cancer Awareness Day](#)
- [HPV Vaccine](#)
- **Indian Pediatric Oncology Group (InPOG):**
 - InPOG was established in 2015 to develop multicentre childhood cancer clinical trials. InPOG is pursuing 31 clinical studies on paediatric cancer.
 - Paediatric cancer patients can access the latest therapies and protocols by participating in clinical trials.
 - In 2021, InPOG evolved into Indian Pediatric Hematology Oncology Group (INPHOG) Research Foundation.

VAIBHAV Fellowship

For Prelims: [Department of Science and Technology \(DST\)](#), [Vaishvik Bhartiya Vaigyanik scheme](#), [Visiting Advanced Joint Research Faculty \(Vajra\) scheme](#), [Non-Resident Indians \(NRI\)](#)

For Mains: Indian Diaspora Significance in India's technological advancements.

[Source:TH](#)

Why in News?

The [Department of Science and Technology \(DST\)](#) recently unveiled the first cohort of **fellows under the [Vaishvik Bhartiya Vaigyanik \(VAIBHAV\) scheme](#)**, a strategic initiative aimed at fostering **short-term collaborations with Indian-origin scientists based abroad**.

- Vaibhav scheme finds similarities with the [Visiting Advanced Joint Research Faculty \(Vajra\)](#) scheme initiated in 2018.

What is VAIBHAV Scheme?

▪ About:

- The Government has launched VAIBHAV fellowships programme in 2023 to connect the **Indian STEM** (Science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and medicine) **diaspora with [Indian academic and R&D institutions](#)** for collaborative research work leading to sharing of knowledge, wisdom, and best practices in the frontier areas of science & technology.
- The VAIBHAV Fellow would identify an **Indian Institution for collaboration and may spend up to two months there in a year for a maximum of 3 years**.
 - The VAIBHAV fellows are expected to collaborate with their Indian counterparts and help initiate research activities in the host institution in the cutting-edge areas of Science and Technology.

▪ Incentives Offered:

- Fellowship would include **fellowship grant (INR 4,00,000 per month)**, international and domestic travel, accommodation and contingencies.
- Host institutions receive research grants to support the collaboration.

▪ Significance of Vaibhav Scheme:

- Strengthens **global collaboration in scientific research**.
- Fosters knowledge exchange and expertise infusion in Indian academic and research institutions.

▪ Implementation:

- The VAIBHAV fellowships programme to be implemented by the **DST**, Ministry of Science and Technology, would be awarded to outstanding scientist/technologists of [Indian origin \[Non-resident Indians \(NRI\) / Persons of Indian Origin \(PIO\) / Overseas Citizen of India \(OCI\)\]](#) who are engaged in research activities in their respective countries.

What is the Visiting Advanced Joint Research Faculty Scheme?

▪ About:

- **VAJRA (Visiting Advanced Joint Research) Faculty Scheme** is a dedicated program exclusively for overseas scientists and academicians with emphasis on **NRI** and **PIO/OCI** to work as adjunct / visiting faculty for a specific period of time in Indian Public funded academic and research institutions.
 - The Scheme recognizes the value of collaborative research as a crucial element for information sharing among researchers for updating and acquiring knowledge and skills, and also to draw different perspectives to solve a shared problem.
- The area of research undertaken by the Faculty should be of interest to India including **translation of science to practice**.
 - Faculty can also teach/mentor during the period of stay.
 - The Faculty will work for a **minimum of 1 month and a maximum of 3 months** a year in an institution in India.
 - The Indian host institution may engage him/her for a longer duration even after the completion of the assignment.
 - The part-time position for faculty will be **initially offered for 1 year and can be renewed every year**.

▪ Incentives Offered:

- The VAJRA Faculty will be provided an amount of USD 15000 in the first month of engagement in a year and USD 10000 per month in the other two months to cover their travel and honorarium.
 - While **no separate support is provided** for e.g. accommodation, medical/personal insurance etc., the host institute may consider providing

additional support.

- The payment to the faculty will be made in Indian Rupees.

▪ **Implementation:**

- VAJRA Faculty Scheme is implemented by the [Science and Engineering Research Board \(SERB\)](#).
 - The SERB is a **statutory body** of the Department of Science and Technology. It was established in 2008 through an Act of Parliament (**Science and Engineering Research Board Act, 2008**).
 - The SERB's objectives include promoting basic research in science and engineering, and providing financial assistance to researchers, academic institutions, and other agencies.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Mains:

Q. 'The Indian diaspora has a decisive role to play in the politics and economy of America and European Countries'. Comment with examples. (2020)

Wandering Albatross



The **Wandering Albatross (Diomedea exulans)** is in the spotlight due to a recent study highlighting its vulnerability.

- Wandering Albatross is the largest flying bird with a wingspan of **3.5 metres**. It spends most of its 60-year lifespan at sea.
 - Primarily found in the [Southern Ocean](#) and surrounding islands, with **Marion and Prince Edward Islands** supporting half of the world's breeding population.
 - It breeds approximately every two years **on land** after reaching sexual maturity.
- It is **vulnerable as per IUCN Red list**, facing threats like bycatch from longline fishing trawlers, pollution and [climate change](#).
 - Albatrosses prefer low, coastal sites for warmth and suitable habitats. Climate change may disrupt these preferences by altering **temperature, rainfall, and wind patterns**.
 - **Wind speed**, an understudied factor, is critical for nest site selection and alteration in speed could impact **nest construction and chick rearing**.

14th National Voters' Day

The President of India recently addressed the **14th National Voters' Day Celebrations** in New Delhi and presented the **Best Electoral Practices Awards for the year 2023** to the State and District level officers for their outstanding performance in the conduct of elections during 2023.

- Since 2011, National Voters' Day has been celebrated on 25th January every year to mark the foundation day of the [Election Commission of India](#).
 - **'Nothing Like Voting, I Vote For Sure'** is the theme of National Voters' Day 2024.
- **ECI initiatives for General Elections 2024** was also unveiled as a part of the event.
 - Till now, **17 general elections** and more than 400 assembly elections have been conducted by the Election Commission.



Election Commission of India (ECI)



About

- **Autonomous Constitutional Authority** - Administers Union/state election
 - LS, RS, State LA, the offices of the President and VP
- Estd - **25th Jan 1950** (National Voters' Day)



Constitutional Provisions

Part XV - Article 324 to 329

Structure

- 1 Chief Election Commissioner and 2 Election Commissioners **appointed by President**
- **Tenure- 6 years, or up to the age of 65 years**, whichever is earlier
- Retiring ECs – **eligible for further appointment by the govt.**
- **Removal of CEC-** Resolution on the **ground of proven misbehaviour or incapacity**, with majority of 2/3rd members present and voting, supported by more than 50% of the total strength of the house



Major Roles and Responsibilities



- Determining Electoral Constituencies
- Preparing/Revising electoral rolls
- Notifying the schedules and dates of elections
- **Registering political parties and granting them the status of national or state parties**
- Issuing the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) for political parties
- Advising the President on **matters concerning the disqualification of MPs**

Challenges

- Truncated Tenure of CEC
- Executive Influence in Appointments
- Dependence on Centre for Finance
- Lack of Independent Staff



Drishiti IAS

Read more: [Increasing Voter Turnouts](#)

Arambai Tenggol

The **Arambai Tenggol (AT)**, a **Meitei radical group**, has garnered support from **Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs)** in Manipur's Imphal Valley, extracting a commitment to convey the concerns of the people to the Centre.

- Arambai Tenggol started in 2020 as a cultural outfit but soon transformed into a radical organisation.
 - It is one of the two hardline Meitei organisations suspected to be involved in many **Meitei-Kuki clashes**, which broke out in May 2023.
- It is also a revivalist organisation that aims to reestablish the pre-Hindu, **native Sanamahi religion** among Meiteis.

Read more: [Violence in Manipur](#)

PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtias.com/current-affairs-news-analysis-editorials/news-analysis/27-01-2024/print>

