



10 Years of UJALA and SLNP

For Prelims: [Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All](#), [Street Lighting National Programme](#), [Light Emitting Diodes](#), [Energy Efficiency Services Limited](#), Incandescent Lamps, Compact Fluorescent Lamps, [Energy Conservation Building Code](#)

For Mains: Energy Efficiency in India, Energy and Environment, Economic Impact of Energy Efficiency Programs, Public Lighting Systems in Urban India

Source: [PIB](#)

Why in News?

The [Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All \(UJALA\) scheme](#), launched on 5th January 2015, marks its 10th anniversary as a transformative initiative in energy efficiency.

- UJALA has revolutionized household lighting, reduced energy consumption, and contributed to India's environmental sustainability goals.
- The [Street Lighting National Programme \(SLNP\)](#), launched with UJALA, aims to replace conventional streetlights with energy-efficient [Light Emitting Diodes \(LEDs\)](#).

What are the Key Facts About UJALA Scheme?

- **About: UJALA Scheme launched in** January 2015, to promote energy efficiency by replacing **traditional lighting systems (incandescent lamps (ICLs) and Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs))** with **energy-saving LED bulbs**.
 - The scheme is a joint project between the Government of India's Public Sector Undertakings, the **Union Ministry of Power's [Energy Efficiency Services Limited \(EESL\)](#)**, and **[DISCOMs \(Distribution Companies\)](#)**.
- **Objective:** The UJALA Scheme aims to save **85 lakh kWh of electricity** and reduce 15,000 tonnes of [Carbon dioxide \(CO₂\)](#) by replacing **77 crore traditional bulbs** and 3.5 crore street lights with LEDs.
- **Need for UJALA:** Lighting accounts for approximately 18-27% of residential electricity use in India.
 - In 2011, Indian households used about **one billion lighting points, with most relying on CFLs (46%)** and tube lights (41%). **Only 0.4% used LED bulbs.**
- **Efficiency of LEDs:** LEDs save up to **90% energy compared to ICLs** and 50% compared to CFLs.
 - LED bulbs use **75% less energy and last 25 times longer than incandescent bulbs**, but the high upfront cost was a major barrier.
- **Key Features of UJALA:**
 - **Subsidized LED Bulbs:** The cost of LED bulbs distributed under UJALA was reduced to Rs 70 per LED bulb, compared to Rs 450 in 2014.
 - **Distribution Mechanism:** The bulbs are distributed via a **demand aggregation-price crash model** (Bulk buying to reduce prices).
 - In 2015, EESL invited open bids for large-scale LED lamp procurement and engaged

state governments to establish a distribution network.

- **Progress and Achievements:** Over 36.87 crore LED bulbs have been distributed across the country, leading to:
 - **Energy Savings:** 47,883 million kWh of energy saved annually.
 - **Cost Savings:** Rs. 19,153 crore saved annually.
 - **CO2 Reduction:** 3.88 million tonnes of CO2 avoided annually.
 - **Peak Demand Avoided:** 9,586 MW peak demand has been avoided.

Note:

- **GRAM UJALA Scheme** was Introduced in March 2021 for rural households, offering LED bulbs at Rs. 10 each in exchange for old incandescent bulbs.
 - Under **Phase-I**, the goal was to distribute **1.5 crore LED bulbs**, achieving energy savings of 2025 million kWh/year and CO2 reduction of 1.65 million tonnes per year.

What are the Key Facts About Street Lighting National Programme?

- **About:** The SLNP, key objectives include **reducing energy consumption, lowering operational costs** for municipalities, and fostering a market transformation towards energy-efficient appliances.
- **Implementing Agency:** EESL was appointed as the implementing agency, collaborating with **Urban Local Bodies (ULBs)**, Municipal Bodies, **Gram Panchayats (GPs)**, and both Central and State Governments to execute the program across the country.
- **Business Model:** The SLNP introduced a unique model where EESL covers initial costs, recovering the investment through **monthly or quarterly payments from municipalities**.
 - EESL also ensures **95% uptime for LED streetlights**, enhancing public safety and providing reliable services without straining local budgets.
- **Achievements:**

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Street Lighting

National Programme

Energy Savings

Peak Demand Reduction

LED Streetlights Installed



1.34
Crore



Over 9,001
Million Units (MUs)
of electricity annually



More than
1,500 MW

CO₂ Emission Reduction



6.2
Million Tonnes
Annually

(As of January 6, 2025)

What are the Key Differences between ICLs, CFLs and LEDs?

Feature	Incandescent Lamps (ICLs)	Compact Fluorescent Lamps (CFLs)	LEDs (Light Emitting Diodes)
Energy Efficiency	Low	Moderate	High
Power Consumption	High	Moderate	Low
Cost of Bulb	Low (initial cost)	Moderate	High (initial cost)
Heat Emission	High	Moderate	Very low

Environmental Impact	High (produces more CO ₂ due to energy waste)	Moderate (contains small amounts of mercury)	Low (no harmful emissions)
Color Options	Warm white	Cool white, Warm white	Warm white, Cool white, RGB
Durability	Fragile	More durable than ICLs	Very durable, impact-resistant
Light Direction	Omnidirectional	Omnidirectional	Directional or omnidirectional
Chemical Composition	Tungsten filament, inert gas (argon or nitrogen)	Mercury vapor, phosphor coating	Gallium nitride (GaN), indium gallium nitride (InGaN), phosphorus (for color)

Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL)

- EESL, founded in 2009 and promoted by the **Ministry of Power**, is a **Super Energy Service Company (ESCO)** that focuses on energy efficiency solutions.
 - EESL implements the **world's largest energy efficiency portfolio** across sectors like lighting, buildings, electric mobility, smart metering, and agriculture.
- EESL has saved over **47 billion kWh of energy annually and reduced carbon emissions by 36.5 million tonnes**.
 - EESL operates as a joint venture of [National Thermal Power Corporation Limited](#), [Power Finance Corporation Limited](#), [REC Limited](#) and [POWERGRID Corporation of India Limited](#).

India's Other Initiatives Related to Energy Efficiency

- [Standards and Labeling \(Bureau of Energy Efficiency \(BEE\)\)](#)
- [The Energy Conservation \(Amendment\) Act, 2022](#)
- [National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency \(NMEEE\)](#)
- [National Electric Mobility Mission Plan \(NEMMP\)](#)
- [Perform Achieve and Trade Scheme \(PAT\)](#)
- [Energy Conservation Building Code \(ECBC\)](#)

Conclusion

The UJALA scheme and SLNP have greatly advanced **India's energy efficiency and sustainability goals**, reducing energy use and carbon emissions while driving economic savings. These initiatives showcase the impact of government-led efforts in promoting a greener, energy-efficient future.

Drishti Mains Question:

Examine the role of government-led initiatives such as the UJALA and SLNP schemes in addressing energy efficiency challenges in India.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question:

Prelims

Q. With reference to street lighting, how do sodium lamps differ from LED lamps? (2021)

1. Sodium lamps produce light at 360 degrees but it is not so in the case of LED lamps.

2. As street lights, sodium lamps have a longer lifespan than LED lamps.
3. The spectrum of visible light from sodium lamps is almost monochromatic, while LED lamps offer significant colour advantages in street lighting.

Select the correct answer using the code given below.

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

Ans: (c)

Q. On which of the following can you find the Bureau of Energy Efficiency Star Label? (2016)

1. Ceiling fans
2. Electric geysers
3. Tubular fluorescent lamps

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

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

Ans: (d)

Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2023-24

For Prelims: [Household Consumption Expenditure Survey](#), [National Statistical Office](#), [Consumer Price Index](#), [Gross Domestic Product](#), [Consumption Inequality](#), [Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi](#)

For Mains: Household Consumption Expenditure Survey, Consumption and Development Policies

Source: [PIB](#)

Why in News?

The [Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation \(MoSPI\)](#) has released the factsheet of the [Household Consumption Expenditure Survey \(HCES\) 2023-24](#), providing key insights into consumption patterns and economic well-being in India.

Household Consumption Expenditure Survey

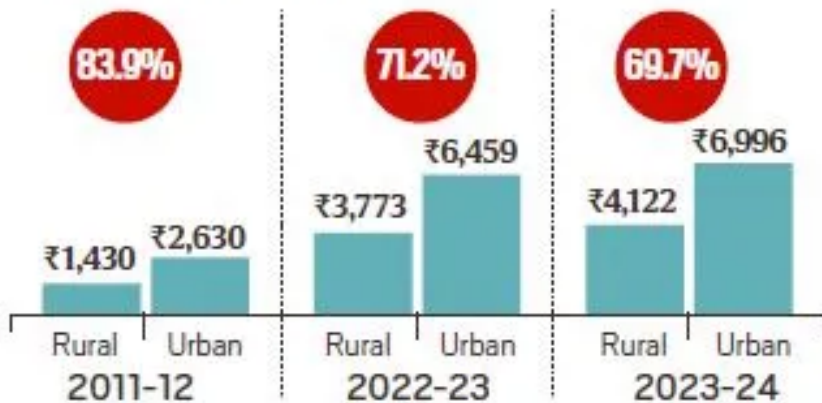
- The HCES collects data on household spending patterns to assess living standards, well-being, and consumption behavior.
- HCES has been conducted by the [National Statistical Office \(NSO\)](#) since 1951 as part of the [National Sample Survey \(NSS\)](#) under the **MoSPI**.
- **Significance:** Provides inputs for calculating [Consumer Price Indices \(CPI\)](#) and revising the base year for **macroeconomic indicators like [Gross Domestic Product \(GDP\)](#)**.
 - HCES helps to measure [poverty](#), inequality, and social well-being.

What are the Key Findings of the HCES 2023-24?

- **Rising Consumption:** Rural consumption spending increased significantly, with the average **monthly per capita expenditure (MPCE)** rising to **Rs 4,122 (up 9.3% from Rs 3,773 in 2022-23)**.
 - The MPCE of urban areas is Rs 6,996 (up 8.3% from Rs 6,459 in 2022-23).
 - The gap between rural and urban consumption narrowed from **83.9% in 2011-12 to 69.7% in 2023-24**, suggesting that rural consumption is growing faster than urban consumption.
 - Imputed values for **free benefits** (e.g., food grains, school uniforms) under welfare schemes marginally increased MPCE estimates.
 - Rural MPCE Rs 4,247 (with imputation) and Urban Rs 7,078 (with imputation).
- **Regional Disparities:** **Sikkim** had the highest MPCE Sikkim (rural Rs 9,377 and urban Rs 13,927), while **Chhattisgarh** (rural Rs 2,739 and urban Rs 4,927) recorded the lowest.
 - **Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, and Kerala**, showed higher-than-average per capita consumption spending.
 - **West Bengal, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh**, had lower spending than the national average.
 - Among the Union Territories (UTs), MPCE is the highest in **Chandigarh** (Rural Rs. 8,857 and Urban Rs. 13,425), whereas it is the lowest in Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (Rs. 4,311) and Jammu and Kashmir (Rs. 6,327) in rural and urban areas, respectively.
- **Consumption Inequality:** The [Consumption Inequality](#), as measured by the [Gini coefficient](#), has decreased in both rural and urban areas.
 - The **Gini coefficient dropped from 0.266 to 0.237** in rural areas and from 0.314 to 0.284 in urban areas from 2022-23 to 2023-24.
- **Food Expenditure:** In 2023-24, spending on **food increased in both rural (47.04%) and urban (39.68%) areas**, reversing previous declines.
 - The highest food expenditure was on **beverages, refreshments, and processed food**, followed by milk, milk products, and vegetables.
- **Non-Food Expenditure:** The share of non-food expenditure remained high, at **52.96%** in rural areas and **60.32%** in urban areas.
 - Rural households spent more on **conveyance** (7.59%), **medical expenses** (6.83%), and **clothing and bedding** (6.63%), while urban households spent more on **conveyance** (8.46%), **miscellaneous goods** (6.92%), and **rent** (6.58%).
- **Fractile Consumption Patterns:** In 2023-24, consumption spending decreased for the top 5% of both rural and urban populations, compared to 2022-23.
 - In contrast, the bottom 5% saw significant increases, with rural spending rising 22% and urban spending growing 19%.
 - This shows significant growth in consumption for the lower-income groups, indicating economic improvement.

ALL-INDIA CONSUMPTION TREND

- Average monthly per capita expenditure (Rs)
- Difference as % of rural MPCE



SHARE OF FOOD IN MONTHLY PER CAPITA EXPENDITURE

(% share of food in MPCE)

Year	Rural India	Urban India
1999-2000	59.46	48.06
2004-05	53.11	40.51
2011-12	52.9	42.62
2022-23	46.38	39.17
2023-24	47.04	39.68

SPENDING ON FOOD ITEMS (% share of MPCE)

	2011-12		2022-23		2023-24	
	RURAL	URBAN	RURAL	URBAN	RURAL	URBAN
Beverages, processed food	7.90	8.98	9.62	10.64	9.84	11.09
Milk & milk products	8.04	7.01	8.33	7.22	8.44	7.19
Vegetables	6.62	4.63	5.38	3.80	6.03	4.12
TOTAL*	52.90	42.62	46.38	39.17	47.04	39.68

SPENDING ON NON-FOOD ITEMS

RURAL INDIA (% share of MPCE)			
	2011-12	2022-23	2023-24
Conveyance	4.20	7.55	7.59
Durable goods	4.85	6.89	6.48
Fuel and light	7.98	6.66	6.11
Total*	47.10	53.62	52.96

URBAN INDIA (% share of MPCE)			
	2011-12	2022-23	2023-24
Conveyance	6.52	8.59	8.46
Durable goods	5.60	7.17	6.87
Rent	6.24	6.56	6.58
Total*	57.38	60.83	60.32

Source: Household Consumption Expenditure Survey 2023-24; * Includes other products

Key Terms

- **Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (MPCE):** The average monthly expenditure per person on essentials like food, healthcare, education, transportation, and other basic needs.
- **Consumption Inequality:** It refers to the unequal distribution of consumption expenditures or goods and services across individuals or households within an economy.
 - The Gini coefficient measures consumption inequality, where **0 represents perfect equality and 100 signifies perfect inequality**. It quantifies the disparity in consumption across households or individuals.

What are the Implications of HCES Findings on Policy Making?

- **Rural Development:** The narrowing rural-urban gap indicates **rising rural incomes**, likely driven by schemes like [Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi \(PM-KISAN\)](#) and [Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act \(MGNREGA\)](#), warranting further policy support.
 - The relatively **high spending on conveyance in rural areas indicates** the need for improved rural transport infrastructure to reduce costs.
 - Encourage investments in rural **non-food sectors like conveyance and durable goods.**
- **Sectoral Shifts:** The growing **expenditure on services (e.g., conveyance, entertainment)** points to a shift toward a **service-driven economy.**
 - Policies should focus on **skilling and job creation in these emerging sectors.**
 - With rural consumption rising, policies should aim to **sustain this growth through skill development and rural industrialization.**
- **Urban Planning and Housing:** High urban spending on rent and conveyance highlights the need for **affordable housing policies and improved public transport infrastructure.**
 - Urban policies **must address stagnation in income growth**, particularly for the middle class, to ensure equitable growth.
- **Regional Disparities:** States with **lower-than-average consumption**, such as Bihar, require focused interventions in education, healthcare, and employment to boost economic activity.
- **Consumer Protection:** Policymakers should **regulate processed food industries** to ensure quality standards and consumer safety.

Read more: [SBI Reports Decline in Poverty in India](#)

Drishti Mains Question:

Analyze the factors contributing to the narrowing rural-urban consumption gap as per the HCES 2023-24 and its implications for rural development policies.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Question:

Prelims

Q. As per the NSSO 70th Round “Situation Assessment Survey of Agricultural Households”, consider the following statements: (2018)

1. Rajasthan has the highest percentage share of agricultural households among its rural households.
2. Out of the total agricultural households in the country, a little over 60 percent belong to OBCs.
3. In Kerala, a little over 60 percent of agricultural households reported to have received maximum income from sources other than agricultural activities.

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

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

Ans: c

Q. In a given year in India, official poverty lines are higher in some States than in others because (2019)

- (a) poverty rates vary from State to State
- (b) price levels vary from State to State

- (c) Gross State Product varies from State to State
(d) quality of public distribution varies from State to State

Ans: (b)

Deciphering the Indus Valley Script

For Prelims: [Indus Valley Civilisation](#), [Artificial Intelligence](#), Indus Valley Script, Boustrophedon Style.

For Mains: Ancient Indian Civilizations, Language Evolution in Ancient India, Deciphering Ancient Scripts

[Source: IE](#)

Why in News?

Recently, Tamil Nadu's Chief Minister, MK Stalin announced a USD 1 million prize for anyone who can successfully **decipher the Harappan (Indus Valley) script of the [Indus Valley Civilisation](#)**.

- It has reignited the century-old mystery of the **Harappan script**, which has eluded over 100 attempts by scholars to decode its meaning.

Note: Deciphering refers to the process of translating unknown symbols or scripts into a readable language.

What is the Indus Valley Script?

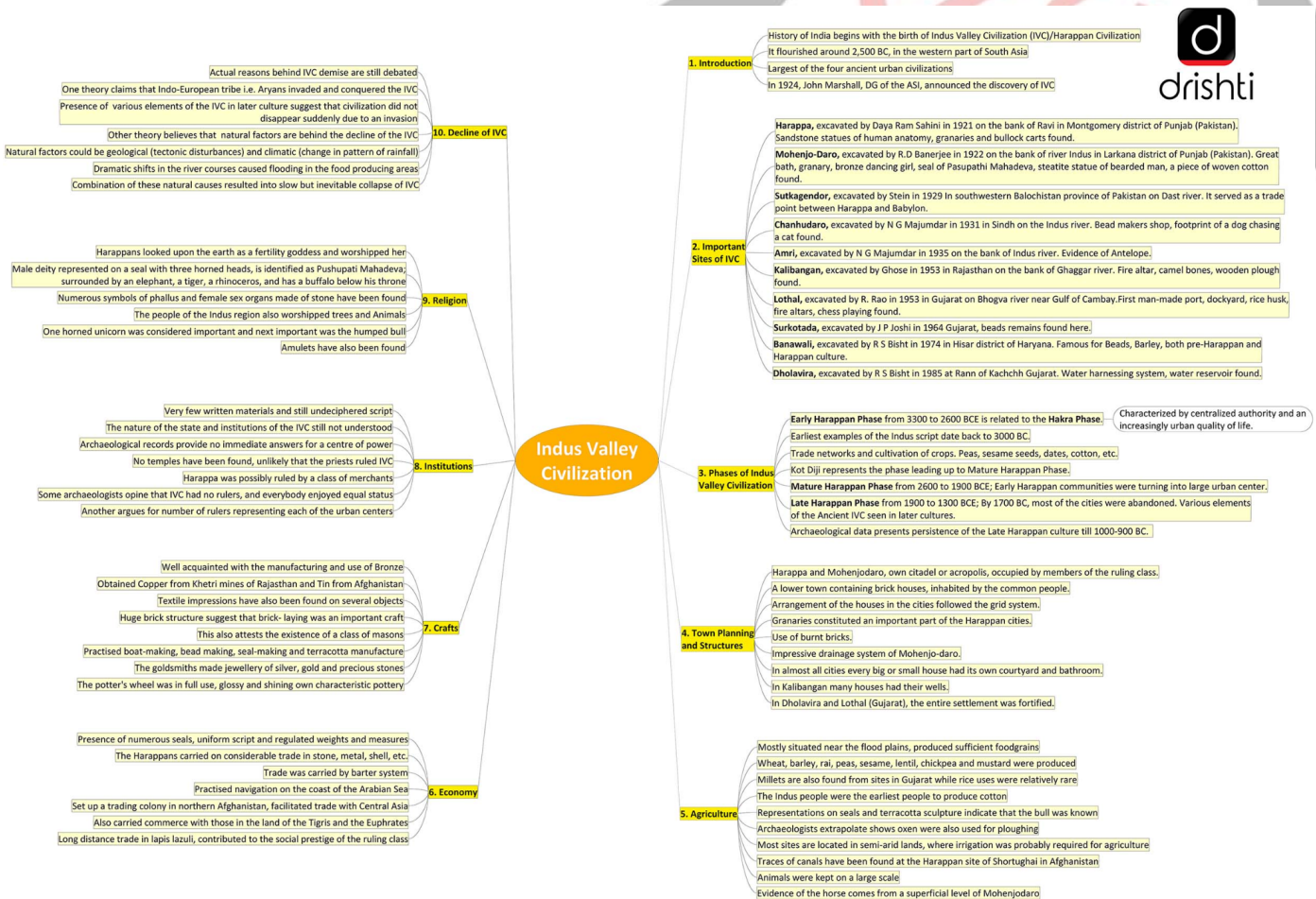
- About:** The Indus Valley Script, used by the **Indus Valley Civilization (2600-1900 BCE)** in present-day Pakistan and north-western India, remains undeciphered.
 - The script was discovered in the 1920s by [Sir John Marshall's team](#). It appears on **seals, terracotta tablets, and metal**, featuring **pictograms** and **animal or human motifs**.
- Writing Style:** Generally **written right to left**, longer texts sometimes used **Boustrophedon Style** (alternating directions between lines).
- Brevity of Inscriptions:** Most inscriptions are **short**, averaging 5 characters, with the longest known text containing **26 symbols**.
 - The brevity has led to debates about whether it represents a full-fledged language or merely symbolic notations.
- Nature of the Script:** Likely a **logosyllabic system**, combining pictograms and syllables, similar to other scripts of its era.
 - Scholars propose a **rebus principle**, where symbols represent sounds or ideas indirectly.
- Purpose and Function:** The script may have been used for trade, tax records, and identification, but its full role remains unclear. Some symbols, resembling multiplication, addition, and the swastika, might also have educational or religious significance.
 - Some believe it was a marking system, not a language-based script.
- Theories About Its Language:**
 - Dravidian Hypothesis:** Supported by **Asko Parpola** and Indian researcher **Iravatham**

Mahadevan.

- Claims the script has **Dravidian roots**, with connections to Old Tamil.
- **Example:** Parpola suggests the 'fish' symbol in the Indus script represents "**meen,**" meaning both "**fish**" and "**star**" in Dravidian languages, aligning with Old Tamil terminology.
 - Some 'number + fish' sequences are believed to refer to star groups, though this remains unproven.

	SIGN	IDENTIFICATION	READING	MEANING
a		fish	<i>mīn</i>	1. fish 2. star
b		3 + fish	<i>mu(m) mīn</i>	three stars (Mrigasiras)
c		6 + fish	<i>caru mīn</i>	six stars (Pleiades)
d		7 + fish	<i>elu mīn</i>	seven stars (Ursa Major)

- **Sanskrit Linkage:** Early scholars like **S.R. Rao** linked the script to **Sanskrit**, tying it to the **Vedic period (1500 - 600 BCE)**.
 - This theory has been contested due to the **timeline mismatch between the Harappan and Vedic cultures.**
- **Non-Linguistic Symbols:** Critics like Steve Farmer and Peggy Mohan argue the symbols were not a language but a system for **political, economic, or religious insignias.**



Note:

- **Script:** A system of writing using symbols or characters to represent the words of a language, such as Latin, Devanagari, or Indus script.
- **Language:** A system of communication involving sounds, words, and grammar to convey

meaning, such as English, Hindi, or Tamil.

What are the Challenges in Decipherment of Indus Valley Script?

- **Lack of Bilingual Texts:** The decipherment of ancient scripts often depends on **bilingual texts**, like the Rosetta Stone, which provided a **Greek translation of Egyptian hieroglyphs**.
 - The Indus script, however, lacks such comparative inscriptions, making it difficult to link symbols to sounds or meanings.
 - The Rosetta Stone, discovered in 1799 near the **Nile** Delta, contains a message written in **Greek, Demotic, and hieroglyphs**. It helped scholars to decipher ancient **Egyptian hieroglyphs**.
- **Short and Fragmentary Texts:** Most inscriptions are brief, with an average of five characters per text.
 - The lack of long texts limits the ability to **analyze grammar, syntax, or patterns** typically used in linguistic decipherment.
- **Unknown Language:** The script likely represents a language with no surviving descendants, making comparisons challenging.
 - Theories suggest **Dravidian, Indo-Aryan**, or a lost language family, but none are conclusive.
- **Symbol Variations:** S.R. Rao (1982) proposed 62 signs in the script, but later Asko Parpola suggested 425 signs (1994).
 - In 2016, Bryan K. Wells proposed 676 signs, but the exact number and their meanings remain debated, leading to confusion.
- **Limited Archaeological Evidence:** The **limited corpus of 3,500 Harappan seals**, unexplored sites, and erosion of artifacts hinder comprehensive script analysis.
- **Technological Constraints:** While **Artificial Intelligence (AI)** and **machine learning** are being applied, current models struggle with **sparse datasets** like the Indus script. Identifying patterns in brief inscriptions remains a significant challenge.

What is the Significance of Deciphering the Indus Script?

- **Unlocking Harappan Language:** Identifying the language family (Dravidian, Indo-Aryan, or others) would offer insights into the linguistic roots of ancient India.
- **Understanding Harappan Culture:** Decipherment could uncover Harappan religious beliefs, societal norms, and sociopolitical structures, including administration and governance.
- **Historical Continuity:** Establishing connections between the Harappans and later civilizations could help trace India's cultural and linguistic evolution.
- **Global Relevance:** The script's study contributes to understanding ancient writing systems, **human communication evolution**, and **cross-cultural exchanges** with Mesopotamia and beyond.
 - Deciphering may reveal ties to Vedic practices and links to Dravidian or Indo-European languages.

MAJOR CIVILISATIONS OF THE WORLD

MESOPOTAMIA, 4000-3500 BC

- ↳ Modern-day Iraq and parts of **Iran, Syria, Kuwait, and Turkey**, between **Tigris and Euphrates Rivers**
- ↳ Known as **Fertile Crescent/Cradle of civilization**
- ↳ Diverse collection of cultures bound by their script, gods, and views on women
- ↳ **Highly esteemed education system** (law, medicine, and astrology, reflecting rich cultural and religious landscape)
- ↳ Both **men and women were involved in diverse occupations**
- ↳ **Cities built around ziggurats**, step-pyramid temples, honoured their patron deity
- ↳ Cities, made of **sun-dried brick**, were the world's first

ANCIENT EGYPT, 3100 BC

- ↳ Set along fertile **Nile River**
- ↳ Most known for **pyramids, tombs, and mausoleums** practice of mummification to prepare corpses for afterlife
- ↳ Left legacy of monumental writing and mathematics systems
- ↳ Civilization **ended in 332 BC** with Alexander the Great's conquest

INDUS VALLEY CIVILISATION, 3300 BC

- ↳ Located in modern-day **India, Afghanistan, and Pakistan**
- ↳ Relatively peaceful compared to other ancient civilizations, with little evidence of widespread warfare
- ↳ **Organised city planning**, complete with **uniform baked-brick homes**, a grid structure, and drainage, sewage, and water supply systems
- ↳ **Declined around 1800 BC**, actual reasons behind demise still debated (theories propose Aryan invasion or climatic & natural factors for decline)

ANCIENT CHINA, 2000 BC

- ↳ Protected by the Himalayan Mountains, Pacific Ocean, and Gobi Desert, and **situated between Yellow and Yangtze rivers**
- ↳ Flourished in isolation from invaders and other foreigners for centuries
- ↳ Generally divided into four dynasties—**Xia, Shang, Zhou, and Qin** - ancient China was ruled by a succession of emperors
- ↳ Credited with developing the **decimal system, abacus, and sundial**, as well as **the printing press**
- ↳ Mobilised populations to build massive infrastructure projects (like Egyptians)



Drishhti Mains Question:

Examine the challenges faced in deciphering the Indus Valley Script and their implications for understanding the Harappan Civilization.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Prelims

Q. Regarding the Indus Valley Civilization, consider the following statements: (2011)

1. It was predominantly a secular civilization and the religious element, though present, did not dominate the scene,
2. During this period, cotton was used for manufacturing textiles in India.

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

Answer: (c)

Q. Which of the following characterize/characterises the people of the Indus Civilization? (2013)

1. They possessed great palaces and temples.
2. They worshiped both male and female deities.
3. They employed horse-drawn chariots in warfare.

Select the correct statements using the codes given below:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1, 2 and 3
- (d) None of the above

Ans: (b)

Mains

Q1: The ancient civilisation in the Indian sub-continent differed from those of Egypt, Mesopotamia and Greece in that its culture and traditions have been preserved without a breakdown to the present day. Comment. **(2015)**

Q2: To what extent has the urban planning and culture of the Indus Valley Civilization provided inputs to present-day urbanization? Discuss. **(2014)**

Supreme Court Calls for Legislative Reviews

For Prelims: [Supreme Court of India](#), [Cybercrimes](#), [IT Act, 2000](#), [National Green Tribunal \(NGT\)](#)

For Mains: Need for Period Review of Laws, Measures to Make Laws more effective in India, Challenges in Law Making, Way Forward

Source: IE

Why in News?

Recently, the [Supreme Court \(SC\)](#), while hearing a plea regarding the 45-day limitation under **Section 81** of the [Representation of the People Act, 1951](#), emphasized the necessity of **periodic legislative reviews to assess the effectiveness of laws**.

- It highlighted the **need for an expert mechanism to evaluate laws and identify deficiencies or bottlenecks**, proposing reviews every 20, 25, or 50 years.

Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RPA 1951)

- **RPA 1951** aims to **regulate the electoral system** at both the national and state levels.
- **Key Provisions of RPA Act:**
 - It outlines the allocation of seats for the **Lok Sabha, State Legislative Assemblies, and State Legislative Councils**.
 - The Act governs the [delimitation of constituencies](#) for the purpose of elections.
 - It specifies the **qualifications and disqualifications for voters** and provides the framework for the **preparation of electoral rolls**.
- **Section 81 of the Act 1951** stipulates that an **election petition** challenging the result must be filed within **45 days** from the declaration of results.
 - It can be based on grounds such as **illegal practices, corruption, or electoral law violations** and must be filed in the [High Court](#) with jurisdiction over the election area.

Why is there a Need for Periodic Review of Laws by the Legislature?

- **Identifying Deficiencies:** Since **laws may lose relevance over time due to evolving circumstances**, regular reviews are essential to ensure **they serve their intended purpose** and allow for necessary modifications or repeal.
 - **Example:** The [IT Act, 2000](#), underwent amendments to address [cybercrimes](#) that were not prevalent earlier.
- **Ensuring Relevance of Legislation:** Periodic reviews ensure that law remains relevant, effective, and aligned with societal needs. They also **address laws enacted hastily or driven by political motives**, ensuring a **focus on legal efficacy and public interest**.
 - **Example:** Enactment of **Anti-liquor law in Bihar** led to a surge in bail applications and strained the state's judiciary.
 - Similarly, **Rajasthan's law** authorizing civil society organizations to raid institutions to prevent cow slaughter raised concerns about the **potential misuse of power and violation of institutional integrity**.
- **Addressing Unintended Consequences:** Periodic reviews can identify areas where **laws inadvertently hinder justice or create inefficiencies**.
 - For instance, **Section 81 of RPA, 1951's** 45-day limit may preclude valid election disputes due to procedural constraints.
- **Improving Accountability:** Regular reviews ensure that **laws remain aligned with their original objectives** and democratic principles.
 - For instance, [Section 498A of the IPC](#), originally intended **to protect women from cruelty** and harassment by their husbands or in-laws, has been **criticized for misuse**.
- **Global Standards:** Many democratic nations **conduct routine legislative reviews** to ensure laws align with international best practices and human rights norms.
 - For example, the **US PATRIOT Act** has been **periodically amended** to address concerns over privacy and civil liberties.

Periodic Revision of Laws in Other Democratic Countries

- **United Kingdom:** The **Law Commission of England and Wales** is tasked with conducting regular reviews of existing laws.

- Its recommendations have led to significant legal reforms, such as the **repeal of the Witchcraft Act, 1735**, demonstrating its role in modernizing archaic laws.
- **Australia:** The Australian Law Reform Commission regularly conducts **systematic reviews of the legal framework and submits detailed** reports with recommendations for legislative amendments.
 - This process ensures that laws remain relevant and effective in addressing contemporary issues.

What are the Challenges in Periodically Reviewing Laws?

- **Lack of Political Will:** Legislative reviews are sometimes **influenced by political agendas**, leading to biased amendments, which might **serve electoral interests rather than public welfare**, undermining the objectivity of the review process.
 - **Example:** [Farm Laws \(2020\)](#) were criticized for **favoring corporate interests over the concerns of farmers** rather than reforming India's agricultural market to address root causes of distress.
- **Judicial Overreach:**
 - Sometimes, the judiciary may be accused of overstepping its boundaries while reviewing laws and affecting the smooth functioning of the review process.
 - **Example:** in the [National Judicial Appointments Commission \(NJAC\) case \(2015\)](#), where the **Supreme Court** struck down the **NJAC Act**, which aimed to reform judicial appointments by including the executive.
- **Legal Complexity:**
 - Many laws are **interdependent**, and **isolated amendments can lead to unintended consequences or conflicts** with existing legislation, complicating the review process.
 - **Example:** **Anomalies in the legal provisions** related to child pornography under the [POCSO Act](#) and the [IPC](#).
- **Limited Public Participation:**
 - Public understanding of legislative processes and legal nuances **is low** and often not encouraging which limits and reduces the impact of the review process.
 - **Example:** The [Ranbir Singh Committee](#) to Reforms Criminal Laws had very **limited public participation** in the consultation process for legal reforms, which raised concerns about inclusivity and comprehensiveness of the reforms.

Institutions Related to Legal Reform in India

- [Administrative Reforms Commission \(ARC\)](#)
- **National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution** (NCRWC) chaired by Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah
- [Committee for Reforms in Criminal Laws \(2020\) under Dr. Ranbir Singh.](#)
- [Law Commission of India](#)

Way Forward

- **Strengthening Law Commission of India:** As India lacks dedicated bodies for periodic legislative reviews, strengthening institutions like the [Law Commission of India](#) with greater independence and resources could enhance the quality and consistency of legal reforms.
- **Leveraging Technology:** Technology can enhance the review process.
 - Platforms like **MyGov** for public consultations and tools like **AI** for evaluating law effectiveness can **improve efficiency and citizen engagement in lawmaking**.
- **Resource Allocation:** The government should allocate **dedicated budgets** for legal reforms, reviews and **capacity-building programs** for civil servants, judges, and law enforcement to improve implementation.

- **Engaging with International Best Practices:** India should align its laws with international standards, as seen with the [National Green Tribunal \(NGT\)](#), to enhance effectiveness in areas like environmental law and technology governance.

Law Commission of India

- It is a **non-statutory advisory body** to **research and recommend legal reforms**.
- It operates for a **fixed tenure**, advising the government on legal matters.
- The first Law Commission was created in **1834** under the [Charter Act of 1833](#), chaired by **Lord Macaulay**, which recommended the codification of the [Indian Penal Code \(IPC\)](#) and the [Criminal Procedure Code \(CrPC\)](#).
- The first Law Commission of Independent India was set up in **1955**, with **M.C. Setalvad** as Chairman.
- In September 2024, [23rd Law Commission](#) was constituted for a three-year term, from 1st September 2024 to 31st August 2027.
- It **reviews and recommends** the repeal of outdated laws, proposes new legislation to implement the Directive Principles of State Policy, and **addresses judicial administration issues**, offering recommendations to the government.

Conclusion

By institutionalizing periodic legislative reviews, India can foster a dynamic legal framework that remains responsive to societal needs, democratic ideals, and global standards. Judicial pronouncements and international practices serve as guiding benchmarks in this endeavor.

Drishti Mains Question:

Why are periodic legislative reviews necessary in India, and what challenges hinder their implementation?

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. With reference to the Indian judiciary, consider the following statements: (2021)

1. Any retired judge of the Supreme Court of India can be called back to sit and act as a Supreme Court judge by the Chief Justice of India with the prior permission of the President of India.
2. A High Court in India has the power to review its own judgement as the Supreme Court does.

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: (c)

Q. Consider the following statements: (2019)

1. The 44th Amendment to the Constitution of India introduced an Article placing the election of the Prime Minister beyond judicial review.
2. The Supreme Court of India struck down the 99th Amendment to the Constitution of India as being violative of the independence of judiciary.

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. With reference to the Constitution of India, consider the following statements: (2019)

1. No High Court shall have the jurisdiction to declare any central law to be constitutionally invalid.
2. An amendment to the Constitution of India cannot be called into question by the Supreme Court of India.

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: (d)

Mains

Q. Constitutional Morality' is rooted in the Constitution itself and is founded on its essential facets. Explain the doctrine of 'Constitutional Morality' with the help of relevant judicial decisions. (2021)

Q. Judicial Legislation is antithetical to the doctrine of separation of powers as envisaged in the Indian Constitution. In this context justify the filing of large number of public interest petitions praying for issuing guidelines to executive authorities. (2020)

Q. Critically examine the Supreme Court's Judgement on 'National Judicial Appointments Commission Act, 2014' with reference to appointment of judges of higher judiciary in India. (2017)

Prioritising Oil Palm Plantation

[Source: PIB](#)

Why in News?

Recently, the **Ministry of Agriculture** urged state governments to **prioritise oil palm plantation** targets under the [National Mission on Edible Oils - Oil Palm \(NMEO-OP\) scheme](#).

What are the Key Facts Regarding NMEO-OP Scheme?

- **About:** NMEO-OP is a [centrally sponsored scheme](#) to enhance domestic production of [crude palm oil \(CPO\)](#), thereby reducing the country's dependence on imports.
- **Objectives:**
 - **Area Expansion:** Cover an **additional 6.5 lakh hectares** of oil palm area by **2025-26**, increasing the total cultivated area to **10 lakh hectares**.
 - **Production Targets:** Increase CPO production from **0.27 lakh tonnes (2019-20)** to **11.20 lakh tonnes (2025-26)** and further to **28 lakh tonnes by 2029-30**.
 - **Per-Capita Consumption:** Maintain consumption level of **19 kg/person/annum till 2025-26**.
 - **Focus Regions:** Special focus is given to the [North-East region](#) and the [Andaman and Nicobar Islands](#) to boost oil palm cultivation and CPO production.
- **Key Features:**
 - **Price Assurance:** It introduces [Viability Price \(VP\) mechanism](#) to protect farmers from international **price fluctuations**.
 - The viability funding will be **paid directly** to the farmers accounts in the form of [DBT](#).
 - **Enhanced Assistance:** Increase in assistance for planting material from **Rs 12,000/ha to Rs 29,000/ha**.
 - Special assistance of **Rs 250 per plant** for rejuvenating old gardens.
 - **Special Provisions for North-East and Andaman:** Additional **2% of the CPO price** will be borne by the government to ensure **parity** in farmer payments across regions.
 - Special provisions are being made for **half moon terrace cultivation, bio fencing and land clearance** along with **integrated farming**.

Note:

- Half-moon terracing is a **soil rearrangement technique** that involves building **semicircular embankments** to collect and concentrate water runoff for plant growth.
- [Bio fencing](#) means planting lines of **trees on the farm and field boundaries** that give protection against **cattle and wildlife**, act as **windbreaks**, enrich the soil, and **control dust**.

Oil Palm

- **Origin and Yield:** It originated in the [tropical rain forest](#) region of **West Africa**. It is a **comparatively new crop in India** but has the **highest vegetable oil-yielding capability per hectare**.
 - Oil yield from oil palm is **five times higher** than that of traditional oilseeds.
- **Types:** It produces two types of oil.
 - **Palm Oil:** Derived from the [mesocarp](#) of the fruit (45-55% oil content).
 - **Palm Kernel Oil:** Obtained from the [kernel](#), a source of lauric oils.
- **Oil Palm Cultivation:**
 - **Major States:** **Andhra Pradesh**, Telangana, and Kerala (98% of total production).
 - **Other Key States:** **Karnataka**, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Gujarat, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, and Nagaland.
- **Potential:** India has a total potential area of around **28 lakh hectares (ha)** but **only 3.70 lakh hectares** is under oil palm cultivation.
- **Imports:** India is the **world's largest palm oil importer** with palm oil imports of **9.2 million tonnes** in 2023-24.
 - **60% of total edible oil imports** consist of palm oil.
 - India buys palm oil mainly from **Indonesia, Malaysia and Thailand**.

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. With reference to 'palm oil', consider the following statements: (2021)

1. The palm oil tree is native to Southeast Asia.
2. The palm oil is a raw material for some industries producing lipstick and perfumes.
3. The palm oil can be used to produce biodiesel.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

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

Ans: (b)

Q. Consider the following statements: (2018)

1. The quantity of imported edible oils is more than the domestic production of edible oils in the last five years.
2. The Government does not impose any customs duty on all the imported edible oils as a special case.

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: (a)

Tranquilising Wild Animals

Source: IE

Recently, a three-year-old tigress, Zeenat, was tranquilised and captured from the forests of **Bankura** in West Bengal and relocated to [Odisha's Simlipal tiger reserve](#).

- **Tranquilization is not only vital for conservation efforts** but also for ensuring the safety of both the animals and human populations.

What is Wildlife Tranquillisation?

▪ About:

- Wildlife tranquillisation is the process of **sedating wild animals using specific [sedative drugs](#)** to safely capture, handle, or relocate them for various conservation, research, or rescue purposes.

▪ Regulation:

- The use of tranquilizers is regulated under the [Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940](#).
- In India, **animal tranquilization is overseen by State Forest Departments** under the [Wildlife Protection Act, 1972](#), with support from trained veterinarians and expertise provided by the [Wildlife Institute of India \(WII\)](#).

▪ Methods and Tools:

- **Tranquilliser Guns and Darts:** The primary tool for wildlife tranquillisation is a **dart gun**, which delivers a **syringe filled with sedative drugs**.
 - The dart is **shot remotely from a distance**, typically using compressed CO₂ gas to propel the dart.
- The dart is often equipped with a **hypodermic needle** and a **barb** to ensure that the drug is effectively administered under the skin.
 - A **tuft of feathers or other stabilising materials** is attached to the dart to improve accuracy during flight.

▪ Types of Drugs:

- **Opioids:** Drugs such as **M99 (etorphine)** used for immobilising large mammals like elephants and tigers.
 - In wildlife tranquillisation, [morphine](#) can sometimes be used in combination with other drugs for immobilisation.
 - **Alpha-Adrenergic Tranquillisers:** Drugs like **Xylazine and Ketamine** are commonly used in combination for sedating animals like deer and tigers.
 - **Xylazine** acts as a sedative and muscle relaxant, while **Ketamine** helps to induce dissociation and extend the period of immobility.
 - These drugs allow for more controlled sedations, with the capacity to reverse the effects using antidotes.
- **Reversal Agents:** Specific antidotes, such as **Naloxone**, are used to reverse the effects of tranquillisation.

▪ Applications:

- **Conservation and Relocation:** Used to safely **relocate animals from human-wildlife conflict zones** or move endangered species to protected reserves.
- **Research and Monitoring:** Employed for **capturing animals for health** assessments, tagging, and studying migration patterns.
- **Rescue Operations:** Essential for **rescuing injured or stranded animals**, enabling veterinary care or transport to rehabilitation centers.

WILDLIFE CONSERVATION INITIATIVES

Constitutional Provisions for Wildlife

42nd Amendment

Act, 1976: Forests & Protection of Wild Animals and Birds (moved from State to Concurrent List)

Article

48 A: State shall endeavor to protect & improve environment and safeguard forests and wildlife of country

Article

51 A (g): Fundamental duty to protect & improve natural environment including forests and Wildlife

Legal Frameworks

Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972

Biological Diversity Act, 2002

Major Conservation Initiatives

Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (IDWH):

- ↳ Financial assistance provided to State/UT Governments for protection and conservation of wildlife
- ↳ A Centrally Sponsored Scheme

National Wildlife Action Plan (2017-2031)

Guidelines for Eco-tourism in Protected Areas

Human-Wildlife Conflict Mitigation

Wildlife Crime Control Bureau: To combat wildlife-related crimes

Wildlife Division (MoEFCC):

- ↳ Policy and law for conservation of biodiversity and Protected Area network
- ↳ Technical and financial support to the State/ UTs under IDHW, Central Zoo Authority and Wildlife Institute of India

Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB):

Collection, collation of intelligence & its dissemination, establishment of centralized Wild Life crime databank, coordination etc.

Wildlife Crime Control:

- ↳ Operation Save Kurma
- ↳ Operation Thunderbird

Species-Specific Initiatives

- Protection and conservation of Greater Adjutant in Gangetic riverine tract
- Dolphin Conservation in Non-Protected Area Segment of Ganga River
- Conservation Breeding Centre for Wild water buffalo (2020)
- Recovery programme for Snow leopard (2009)
- Recovery programme for Vultures (2006)
- Project Elephant (1992)
- Project Tiger/National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) (1973)

India's Collaboration with Global Wildlife Conservation Efforts

- ↳ Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)
- ↳ Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)
- ↳ Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)
- ↳ World Heritage Convention
- ↳ Ramsar Convention
- ↳ The Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network (TRAFFIC)
- ↳ United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF)
- ↳ International Whaling Commission (IWC)
- ↳ International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
- ↳ Global Tiger Forum (GTF)



Drishti IAS

India's Efforts for Wildlife Conservation

- **Constitutional Provisions for Wildlife:**

- The [42nd Amendment Act, 1976](#), Forests and Protection of Wild Animals and Birds was transferred from **State to Concurrent List**.
- [Article 51 A \(g\)](#) states that it shall be the **duty** of every citizen to have compassion for living creatures.
- [Article 48A](#) mandates that the State shall endeavor to protect and improve the environment and to safeguard the **forests and wildlife of the country**.
- **Legal Framework:**
 - [Wildlife \(Protection\) Act, 1972](#)
 - [Environment Protection Act, 1986](#)
 - [The Biological Diversity Act, 2002](#)
- **International Collaboration:**
 - [Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora \(CITES\)](#)
 - [Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals \(CMS\)](#)
 - [Convention on Biological Diversity \(CBD\)](#)
 - [The Wildlife Trade Monitoring Network \(TRAFFIC\)](#)
 - [International Union for Conservation of Nature \(IUCN\)](#)
 - [Global Tiger Forum \(GTF\)](#)

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. If a particular plant species is placed under Schedule VI of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, what is the implication? (2020)

- (a) A licence is required to cultivate that plant.
- (b) Such a plant cannot be cultivated under any circumstances.
- (c) It is a Genetically Modified crop plant.
- (d) Such a plant is invasive and harmful to the ecosystem.

Ans: (a)

78th Foundation Day of Bureau of Indian Standards

Source: PIB

Recently, the [Bureau of Indian Standards \(BIS\)](#) celebrated its **78th Foundation Day on 6th January 2025**.

- **About BIS:** BIS is the **statutory national standard body** of India established under the [BIS Act, 2016](#) for the **harmonious development** of the activities of **standardization, marking and quality certification** of goods.
 - It was initially set up as the **Indian Standards Institution (ISI)** that came into being on **6th January 1947**.
 - It functions under the **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food, and Public Distribution**.
- **Functions:** It operates various schemes like [Product Certification \(ISI mark\)](#), [Hallmarking](#) of Gold and Silver Jeweller, [ECO Mark Scheme](#) (for labeling of environment friendly products).
- **Standards National Action Plan (SNAP) 2022- 27:** It serves as a **strong foundation for standardization** to meet the emerging technologies and concerns of sustainability and climate

change.

- It will be **pivotal** in enriching and strengthening “**Quality Culture**” in the Nation.
- **Achievements: 94%** of Indian standards have been harmonised with the [International Organisation for Standardisation \(ISO\)](#) and the [International Electrotechnical Commission \(IEC\)](#) standards.
 - Over **44.28 crore** articles of **gold, jewellery/artefacts** have been hallmarked so far.

Read More: [Bureau of Indian standards \(BIS\) Act, 2016](#)

BHARATPOL Portal

Source: TH

The Union Home Minister of India launched the '**BHARATPOL**' portal to enhance the **efficiency of Indian investigation agencies** in tracking fugitives and facilitating faster international assistance.

- **BHARATPOL Portal:** Developed by the [Central Bureau of Investigation \(CBI\)](#), the portal allows central and state agencies to **connect with the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) for real-time information sharing**, replacing the previous system where **only the CBI had this access**.
 - BHARATPOL streamlines international assistance to tackle rising transnational crimes like [cybercrime, drug trafficking, and human trafficking](#).
 - The portal will enhance the processing of Red Notices and other INTERPOL notices, making it easier for **field-level police officers** to address crimes.
- **Capacity Building:** The CBI is tasked with training states on using BHARATPOL and implementing the three new criminal laws for effective trials.

INTERPOL



About

- Official Name – International Criminal Police Organization (ICPO - INTERPOL)
 - Establishment year – 1923
 - Member states – 195
 - India has been a member since 1956.
 - Headquarters – Lyon, France
- An inter-governmental organization

Objective

- **Collects and disseminates information from various police forces** to facilitate criminal investigation across the globe.
 - Doesn't have law enforcement powers such as arrest.

Composition

- **President** (head of Interpol) – **elected for 4 years**
- **Secretary General** (performs day-to-day activities) – **for 5 years**
- **Specialized Secretariat** – deals with specific issues like **cybercrime, terrorism, human & drug trafficking, financial & environmental crime, etc.**
- **General Assembly** - supreme governing body (meets once a year). India hosted INTERPOL General Assembly in 2022.

INTERPOL Notices

These are international requests for cooperation or alerts allowing police in member countries to share critical crime-related information.



MISSING PERSON



WARNINGS AND INTELLIGENCE



IMMINENT THREAT



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



WANTED PERSON



UNIDENTIFIED BODIES



MODUS OPERANDI



GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS SUBJECT TO UNSC SANCTIONS

INTERPOL National Central Bureau (NCB)

- The NCB is the designated contact point for Interpol.
- India's Interpol NCB – **Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI)**

358th Birth Anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh Ji

Source: [PIB](#)

Recently, the Prime Minister paid tributes to **Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the 10th Sikh Guru**, on his **358th birth anniversary**, celebrated as **Prakash Utsav** ([Prakash Parv](#) is celebrated on the birth anniversary of [Guru Nanak Dev Ji](#)).

- His birth anniversary is based on the [Nanakshahi calendar](#) (follows the solar year) according to which it will fall on **6th January in 2025**.
- **About Guru Gobind Singh Ji:**
 - **Early Life:** He was born on **22nd December 1666**, in **Patna Sahib, Bihar**. He succeeded his father, [Guru Teg Bahadur](#), the 9th Sikh Guru.
 - **Contributions:** He established the [Khalsa](#) in **1699**, a warrior community dedicated to protecting faith and justice.
 - Introduced the **Five K's** as symbols of Sikh identity i.e., **Kangha** (comb), **Kesh** (uncut hair), **Kara** (steel bracelet), **Kirpan** (sword), and **Kachhera** (shorts).
 - His sons **Zorwar Singh (age 7)** and **Fateh Singh (age 9)** were executed by Sarhind's governor **Wazir Khan** after they refused to convert to Islam.
 - His two elder sons **Ajit Singh** and **Jujhar Singh** sacrificed their lives in the [Battle of Chamkaur \(1705\)](#) where a **small Sikh force fought the Mughals and hill kings**.
 - **26th December** is observed as '[Veer Bal Diwas](#)' to mark their martyrdom.
 - **Panj Pyare:** Guru Gobind Singh established the **institution of Panj Pyare** where he asked for **five heads for sacrifice** and five men willingly responded to his call.

Read More: [Sikhism](#)

India's First Organic Fisheries Cluster in Sikkim

Source: [TH](#)

The **Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying** launched **India's first organic fisheries cluster in Soreng District, Sikkim** under the [Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana \(PMMSY\)](#).

- **Organic Fisheries Cluster:** It aims to produce **antibiotic, chemical, and pesticide-free organic fish** for eco-conscious markets globally.
 - The initiative promotes **sustainable aquaculture and ecologically healthy fish farming, preventing pollution** and damage to aquatic ecosystems.
 - [National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development](#) will fund infrastructure, build capacities, and form **Fisheries-based Farmer Producer Organizations (FFPOs)** to support the cluster.
- **Sikkim an Organic State:** Sikkim becomes **India's first fully organic state**, with 75,000 hectares of land converted to certified organic practices under the [National Programme for Organic Production](#).
- **PMMSY:** Aims to develop the fisheries sector through sustainable practices with an investment of Rs 20,050 crores.
 - It focuses on enhancing fish production, infrastructure, and marketing while ensuring

the **welfare of fishers and fish farmers.**

- The scheme is being implemented across India from **FY 2020-21 to FY 2024-25** by the **Department of Fisheries.**

Read more: [Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana](#)

Inauguration of Jammu and Rayagada Railway Division

Source: [IE](#)

Recently, **Prime Minister (PM)** virtually inaugurated the **new Jammu Railway Division**, India's 70th division, carved from the Firozpur Division, covering 742.1 km.

- He also inaugurated the **Cherlapally terminal station in Telangana** and laid the foundation stone for the **Rayagada railway division (69th Division) building** in Odisha under the **East Coast Railway zone.**
- Indian Railways now has **17 zones** and **70 divisions.**
- **New Jammu Railway Division:** Jammu Railway Division has been carved from the **Firozpur Division** and covers **742.1 km.**
 - A new **Katra-Reasi railway section** and **Vande Bharat train services to Srinagar** will also start from 26th January 2025.
- The PM highlighted ongoing efforts in expanding **metro networks, dedicated freight corridors,** alongside initiatives such as **solar-powered stations** and the **development of high-speed rail systems.**
- **About Indian Railways:**
 - It was established in **1853** and is **one of the largest railway networks globally.**
 - The **first train in India** ran over a distance of 21 miles, connecting **Bombay and Thane.**
 - India has the 3rd **largest metro-rail network** in the world after **China and the US.** By 2050, India is projected to account for **40% of the global rail activity.**

Vande Bharat Express salient features:

■ India's first indigenous semi-high speed 160 kmph train set	■ Better fire safety, Emergency alarm push buttons & Talk-back units
■ Reclining ergonomic seats & comfortable seating with revolving seats in executive class	■ Aircraft-style bio-vacuum toilets, CCTVs, diffused LED lighting in all coaches
■ Intelligent regenerative braking system, faster acceleration & deceleration	■ KAVACH indigenously developed anti-train collision system
■ Driver cabin at both ends eliminates need for locomotive reversal	■ Mini Pantry, Automatic plug doors for entry & exit
■ Better ride comfort, Fully Sealed gangways for free passenger movement	■ GPS based audio-visual passenger information system, on-board hotspot Wi-Fi
■ Mobile charging sockets for every seat	■ Better heat ventilation & AC control through higher efficiency compressor, with UV lamp for germ-free air



Read More: [India's Journey of Infrastructure Development](#)

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