

VETRI IAS STUDY CIRCLE

Current Affairs

(A book for TNPSC Examination)

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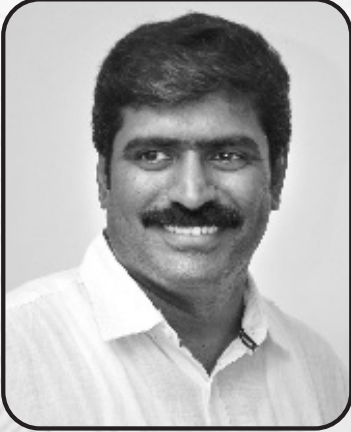
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Preface



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My Dear Aspirants,

Greetings to all of you! "What we think we become" Gautama Buddha. We all have dreams. To make dreams come into reality it takes a lot of determination, dedication, self discipline and continuous effort.

We at VETRII IAS Study Circle are committed to provide the right guidance, quality coaching and help every aspirants to achieve his or her life's cherished goal of becoming a civil servant.

The class room coaching at VETRII IAS Study Circle is meticulously planned to equip the aspirants with all the relevant facts and fundamentals of the subjects. Further the VETRII IAS Study Circle Study materials aim to support the candidate by providing the most relevant study material in a comprehensive manner.

We also thank other family members of Vetrii for making this effort a reality.

We wish the aspirants ALL THE VERY BEST
for their journey in Civil Services !

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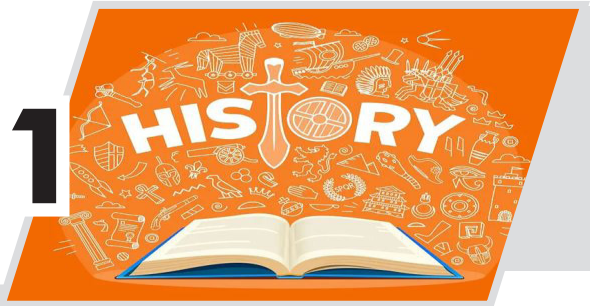
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CONTENTS

HISTORY 01



06 POLITICAL SCIENCE



GEOGRAPHY 10



13 ECONOMICS



SCIENCE 16



NATIONAL-DIARY OF EVENT

18



21

INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

TAMILNADU AFFAIRS

22



1. HISTORY



1.1 IMPORTANT DAYS

Date	Day	Theme / Remark
February 21	International Mother Language Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The year 2025 marks the 25th anniversary of International Mother Language Day▪ Theme “Silver Jubilee Celebration of International Mother Language Day,”▪ In recognition of the Bengali people’s struggle for their language and culture, in November 1999, the General Conference of the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) declared International Mother Language Day, which the UN General Assembly further recognised in a 2002 resolution.
February 29	National Science Day	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ It is observed on February 29 to commemorate the discovery of the Raman Effect by the eminent physicist Dr. C.V. Raman in 1928.▪ This discovery earned him the Nobel Prize in Physics in 1930, making him the first Indian to receive this prestigious honor in the field of science.▪ Theme - “Empowering Indian Youth for Global Leadership in Science and Innovation for Viksit Bharat.”▪ This theme underscores the role of young minds in shaping India’s future in science and technology, aligning with the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.▪ The first official celebration took place in 1987

1.2 DEFENCE, NATIONAL SECURITY AND TERRORISM

Procurement of 149 Software Radios at a cost of Rs. 1,220.12 crore; Ministry of Defense signs contract with 'BEL'

- This procurement contract has been undertaken under the category of Indigenous Design, Development, and Manufacturing (IDDM).
- Through this, the Coast Guard's capabilities will be strengthened to fully undertake its responsibilities including strict enforcement of maritime laws, maritime search and rescue operations, fishermen's safety, and maritime environmental protection.
- The Ministry of Defense also undertook a contract for procuring 1,868 'RTFLT' trucks capable of carrying heavy loads to facilitate

the transportation of defense equipment from one place to another for all three armed forces at a cost of Rs. 697.35 crore from ACE (AC E) company and JCB India.

Naval Anti-Ship Missile (NASM-SR)

- Developed by DRDO & Industry Partners
- DRDO & Indian Navy conducted successful trials of the Naval Anti-Ship Missile (NASM-SR) on February 25, 2025, at ITR, Chandipur.
- The missile was launched from an **Indian Naval Seaking Helicopter**, demonstrated its Man-in-Loop capability, allowing pilots to change targets mid-flight.
- The system integrates **indigenous navigation, propulsion, and avionics technologies**.

1.3 WORLD SUMMITS AND ORGANISATION

17th 'BRICS' Summit

- The annual summit of the 'BRICS' alliance is scheduled to take place on July 6-7, 2025, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

About BRICS

- Founded: 2009
- First BRIC Summit: Russia (2009)
- 16th BRICS Summit: Kazan, Russia (2024)

Members (10):

- **Original 5 members (BRICS):** Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa
- **New 5 members:** Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirate

Indian Ocean Conference

- 8th edition of the **Indian Ocean Conference (IOC)** commenced in Muscat on February 16-17, 2025.
- This year's theme is **Voyage to New Horizons of Maritime Partnership**
- Established – 2016

OPEC+

- **Context :** Brazil has officially announced its decision to join the OPEC+ group of oil-producing nations as an observer.

About OPEC +

- **Formation** - Formed in late 2016 as an extension of OPEC
- **Members** - 12 OPEC countries (Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, UAE, Venezuela, Nigeria, Libya, Algeria, Equatorial Guinea, Republic of Congo, Gabon) plus 10 non-OPEC countries (Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Brunei, Kazakhstan, Russia, Mexico, Malaysia, South Sudan, Sudan, and Oman)
- **Headquarters** - Vienna, Austria (OPEC Headquarters)
- **Goals** - Regulate oil supply to stabilize oil prices and ensure profitability for member countries
- **Influence** - Controls over 80% of oil reserves with OPEC+ nations.

Bay of Bengal Inter-Governmental Organisation

- India has recently assumed the Chairmanship of the Bay of Bengal Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO) from Bangladesh.
- This transition took place during the 13th Governing Council Meeting held in Malé, Maldives.
- The event was part of a high-level conference focused on mainstreaming ecosystem approaches to fisheries management in small-scale fisheries.

About BOBP-IGO

- The BOBP-IGO was established in 2003.

- This Regional Fisheries Advisory Body (RFAB) gives advice on fishing to countries around the Bay of Bengal.
- Its primary aim is to assist member countries in enhancing livelihood opportunities for small-scale fisherfolk in the Bay of Bengal region.
- Current member countries include Bangladesh, Maldives, and Sri Lanka.
- Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Thailand participate as cooperating non-contracting parties.

1.4 SPORTS

23rd National Para Athletics Championship

- In this competition held in Chennai, the Tamil Nadu team secured 2nd place with 50 medals

including 17 gold, 18 silver, and 15 bronze.

- Haryana secured first place, and Uttar Pradesh secured third place.

1.5 AWARDS AND HONORS

18 Artisans Receive State Government Awards

- To encourage artisans, state awards are given under the name "Living Handicraft Treasure" and by Poompuhar.
- Living Handicraft Treasure Awards 2023-24
- Awarded to 9 artisans including C. Murugesan, R. Radha (Thanjavur - Art plate, Netti work), S.Rajagopal (Erode - Pancha Loha sculpture), C. Balaraman (Viluppuram - Terracotta sculpture), and others
- Each recipient gets Rs. 1 lakh cheque, 8-gram gold medal, copper medal, and certificate

Meyyar (Chennai metal sculpture, paper pulp dolls, Thanjavur painting, terracotta sculpture) and others

- Each recipient gets Rs. 50,000 cheque, 4-gram gold medal, copper medal, and certificates

Time Magazine's Women of the Year List

- Purnima Devi Barman, a wildlife biologist from Assam, has been named in Time Magazine's Women of the Year list for 2025
- 13 women from various countries have been selected
- She leads initiatives to protect the 'Hargila' stork species. Under her leadership, a group called 'Hargila Army' consisting of 20,000 women is engaged in protecting the nests of Hargila birds.

Poompuhar State Awards 2023-24

- Awarded to 9 artisans including C.V. Ramakrishnan, K. Gunasundari, C. Kathan, R.

1.6 APPOINTMENTS – WHO IS WHO?

New Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) appointed

- Former IAS officer and Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar has been appointed as the new Chief Election Commissioner (CEC).
- **Appointment process**

Old method

- Article 324 -CEC and ECs will be appointed by the President, this is subject to Parliamentary law (if such law exists)
- In the absence of such a law, the President has been making appointments as per the recommendations of the Prime Minister.

New method

- The selection process follows the Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Service and Term of Office) Act, 2023.
- A panel consisting of the Prime Minister, Leader of the Opposition and a Union Cabinet Minister.

About the Election Commission of India:

- It was established on January 25, 1950.
- Part XV of the Indian Constitution deals with elections.
- Articles 324 to 329 cover the powers, functions, tenure, and eligibility of the Commission and its members.
- It consists of one Chief Election Commissioner and 2 Election Commissioners.

New Election Commissioner Appointed

- **Vivek Joshi** took charge as the new **Election Commissioner**

- A 1989 batch IAS officer from Haryana cadre, he has served as Chief Secretary of Haryana state government, Secretary in the Central government's Department of Personnel and Training and Financial Services, Registrar General and Census Commissioner, and Member Secretary of Haryana's 5th Finance Commission

New FBI Director Appointment

- Kash Patel, of Indian descent, has been selected as the Director of the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)
- In the Senate vote for the FBI leadership position, 51 members voted in favor while 49 members voted against.

Appointment of Prime Minister's Second Principal Secretary

- Shaktikanta Das, former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, has been appointed as the Second Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister.
- He previously served as a member of the 15th Finance Commission headed by N.K. Singh, as India's representative to the G20, and as the 25th Governor of the Reserve Bank.
- Retired IAS officer R. Balakrishnan has been appointed as the head of the International Institute of Tamil Studies.
- He is the first Tamil student to have written and passed the civil service examinations in Tamil.

- He was selected for the Indian Administrative Service in 1984.
- His activities and contributions are notable in the areas of the spread of Dravidian language family, Indus Valley civilization, ancient Tamil legends, Sangam literature, and Thirukkural.
- International Institute of Tamil Studies
- **Established:** 1968
- **Founder:** Ministry of Finance, Government of India
- **Headquarters:** Mumbai, Maharashtra
- **Regional offices** located in Ahmedabad, Kolkata, Chennai, and Delhi
- Received statutory status on January 30, 1992

New 'SEBI' Chairperson Appointed

- Tuhin Kanta Pandey, Secretary of the Central Finance and Revenue Department, has been appointed as the new Chairperson of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)
- He is a 1987-batch Odisha cadre IAS officer and the most senior official handling the Revenue Department in the Finance Ministry

About SEBI :

- Established on April 12, 1988

Appointment of Prime Minister's Second Principal Secretary

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- He previously served as a member of the 15th Finance Commission headed by N.K. Singh, as India's representative to the G20, and as the 25th Governor of the Reserve Bank.



2. POLITICAL SCIENCE

2.1 LATEST COURT VERDICTS

Section 14(1) of the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013

- The following public servants fall under the Lokpal's purview, As per the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013.
- Prime Minister (with certain limitations, e.g., national security issues are excluded), Union Ministers
- Members of Parliament (MPs) (except in cases related to parliamentary speech/voting in the House),
- Group A, B, C, and D government officials (including all bureaucrats and civil servants), Employees of public sector undertakings (PSUs).
- Employees of public sector undertakings (PSUs)
- Chairpersons, members, officers, or employees of: (Any body established by an Act of Parliament, Any entity wholly or partially financed by the Central Government, Any organization controlled by the Central Government, Any society, trust, or autonomous body receiving government funds.

- Officials of NGOs receiving government funding above a certain threshold

Who Does Not Come Under Lokpal

- Judges of the Supreme Court (As per the January 3, 2025 Lokpal ruling)
- State Government Employees (They come under Lokayuktas, not Lokpal)
- Private Citizens (unless involved in corruption cases linked to government funds)

Lokpal

- The top anti-corruption ombudsman in India, established under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 (a statutory body), to investigate corruption complaints against public officials, including the Prime Minister, Ministers, MPs, and bureaucrats
- It consists of a Chairperson (a former Chief Justice or Supreme Court judge) and up to 8 members, with at least 50% from judicial backgrounds and 50% from SC/ST/OBC, minorities, or women categories.

2.2 PROBLEMS IN CONDUCT OF PUBLIC ELECTIONS

Delimitation

- Delimitation is the process of redrawing electoral constituency boundaries based on the latest Census (Article 82).
- It ensures equal representation by adjusting Lok Sabha seats according to population changes (Article 81).
- **Conducted four times:** 1952, 1963, 1973, and 2002.
- **1976 (42nd Amendment):** Indira Gandhi froze the number of Lok Sabha seats until 2001 Census to protect states with better population control.
- **2002 (84th Amendment):** Vajpayee government extended the freeze until 2026 (after the 2031 Census).

- **Current debate:** The 2021 Census is delayed, and the government may advance delimitation.

Delimitation Process

- The Delimitation Commission (appointed by the President) includes A retired Supreme Court/High Court judge, Chief Election Commissioner and State Election Commissioner
- The draft report is published for public feedback before finalization.

Judicial Review of Delimitation

- Article 329(a) prevents courts from questioning delimitation decisions
- Supreme Court (July 2024 ruling): Courts can review delimitation if it is arbitrary or unconstitutional.

2.3 PUBLIC AWARENESS & GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Panchayat Devolution Index (PDI)

- Tamil Nadu ranked third at the all-India level with a score of 68.38, behind Karnataka (72.23) and Kerala (70.59).
- Study conducted by Union Panchayati Raj Ministry & Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA).
- Report as 6 dimension - framework, functions, finances, functionaries, capacity enhancement/ building, and accountability.
- The study revealed that as for Tamil Nadu, the share of panchayats' revenue in the State's Own Revenue was 0.31% during 2021-22.

- Tamil Nadu has the highest score at the national level with 60.24 with regard to the dimension of "functions," one of the six dimensions scrutinised to assess the performance of 28 States and seven Union Territories
- The Tamil Nadu Panchayat Act, 1994, was enacted with the primary goal of furthering the objective of decentralized democracy and making the systems and institutions of local self-governance solid and formal.
- The Act deals with multiple aspects, like the creation, constitution, powers, and functions of various tiers of panchayat bodies in the state of Tamil Nadu.

2.4 GOVT – WELFARE ORIENTED GOVT SCHEMES

Samagra Shiksha Scheme

- It is a comprehensive education program from pre-school to class twelve. It supports free and compulsory education rights for all children.
- Objective:** To provide equal, inclusive classroom environment and quality education for all children. It should effectively engage children in learning, considering their diversity, multilingual needs, and educational abilities.
- Extended from 2021-22 to 2025-26.
- Follows SDG-4 (Sustainable Development Goal for Education) and National Education Policy (NEP) 2020.
- SDG-4.1 (Ensuring free and quality education for all by 2030),
- SDG-4.5 (Equal education and technological access for gender equality, disabilities, tribal people, and children in vulnerable situations).

New Delhi Chief Minister Takes Oath

- Rekha Gupta of BJP, a first-time MLA, was selected as Delhi's ninth Chief Minister
- She becomes the fourth BJP Chief Minister of Delhi, following BJP leaders Madan Lal Khurana, Sahib Singh Verma, and Sushma Swaraj.

Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)

- India's flagship crop insurance scheme, launched on February 18, 2016

- Under - Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers welfare centrally sponsored scheme

Aim:

- Provides comprehensive crop insurance to safeguard farmers against natural disasters, pests, and diseases.

Achievements over the past 9 years

- Rs. 1.75 lakh crore disbursed in claims.
- Benefitted over 23.22 crore farmers.
- Helped in stabilizing incomes and promoting innovation & sustainable agriculture.

YES-TECH (Kharif 2023)

- A significant advancement was introduced in Kharif 2023 with the launch of YES-TECH (Yield Estimation System Based on Technology) to improve accuracy in yield loss assessment.

Future Hold for (PMFBY)

- Government Extended the PMFBY and the Restructured Weather-Based Crop Insurance Scheme (RWBCIS) for the 2025-26 period with Rs.69,515.71 crore allocation
- To providing long-term risk coverage for farmers against unpredictable natural calamities, thus ensuring a safety net for the agricultural community in India.

PM Kisan

- Under this scheme (Farmers' Assistance Fund), the central government released more than Rs.22,000 crore to about 9.8 crore farmers as the 19th installment.

About PM Kisan

- Started:** February 24, 2019

- All small and marginal farmers receive Rs.6,000 annual income in three installments. The amount is directly deposited into bank accounts.
- Provided by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
- **Launched On:** February, 2025
- **Ministry :** Ministry of Rural Development, Department of Land Resources (DoLR)
- The initiative is 100% centrally funded and is currently in a pilot phase covering 152 urban local bodies in 26 states.

NAKSHA

- National geospatial Knowledge-based land Survey of urban HABitations (NAKSHA)
- It is a city survey initiative under the existing Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme (DILRMP).
- It aims to modernize urban land records using GIS and aerial surveys by creating an accurate geospatial database for towns and cities.
- Tamil Nadu is one of the 26 states where the pilot phase of NAKSHA is being conducted.
- Tamil Nadu is one of the few states (along with Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Goa) that already has structured and relatively updated urban land records.





3. GEOGRAPHY

3.1 POLICY ON ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

Nocturnal, Diurnal, Crepuscular Animals

- Scientists at Macquarie University, have found that two nocturnal bull ant species (*Myrmecia pyriformis* and *Myrmecia midas*) use polarized moonlight as a guide to navigate in the dark.
- Wildlife biologists sort animals into **three categories** based on the time of day when they are most active
- **Nocturnal animals are most active at night**
 - **Examples:** bats, owls, some rodents, raccoons, moths, badgers, some frogs and toads, geckos.
- **Diurnal animals are most active in the daytime.**
 - **Examples:** many snakes and other reptiles, hummingbirds, hawks, eagles, falcons, ducks, bees, butterflies, moose.
- **Crepuscular animals are most active during twilight – at dusk and/or dawn**
 - **Examples:** deer, cougars, some rabbits and hares, some songbirds, coyotes, foxes, some beetles, some frogs and toad.

UNESCO Heritage Status Proposal

- **Maharashtra has submitted a proposal to UNESCO for World Heritage status for 12 forts associated with Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj**

- **Proposal Theme:** The proposal is submitted under the concept of 'Maratha Military Landscape of India', highlighting the strategic and historical significance of the forts.
- The 12 forts in the proposal are :
 - **Maharashtra:** Lohagad, Salher, Raigad, Rajgad, Pratapgad, Panhala, Shivneri, Sindhudurg, Suvarnadurg, Vijaydurg, Khanderi.
 - **Tamil Nadu:** Gingee Fort
- Total UNESCO World Heritage sites in India – 43 (35 – cultural , 7 –natural , 1 – mixed)

Indian Carbon Market

- **Emissions Intensity Targets:** The Union government will announce emissions intensity targets for nine industrial sectors by February-end 2024.

Carbon Trading Timeline:

- Industries will have one year to implement compliance measures.
- Carbon credit trading is expected to begin by October 2026.

Indian Carbon Market:

- Aims to reduce, remove, or avoid greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions through a carbon trading framework.
- Focuses on emissions intensity (GHG emitted per unit of activity) rather than absolute cuts.

- **Industries Affected** :The nine sectors required to comply are iron & steel, aluminium, chlor-alkali, cement, fertilizers, pulp & paper, petrochemicals, petroleum refineries, and textiles.
- India missed the December 2024 deadline but is finalizing the report.

Contents of the BTR:

Carbon Credit Mechanism:

- Unlike European emission trading, where companies must cap emissions, India's approach focuses on making production more efficient.
- Example: Steel production—industries can adopt technologies that reduce coal consumption or recover waste heat.
- Covers energy efficiency trends and renewable energy adoption
- Provides a detailed overview of emissions sources and climate mitigation efforts.
- Sectoral Contributions to Emissions (2020 Data):
 - Energy Sector: 75.66% (largest contributor)
 - Agriculture: 13.72%
 - Industrial Processes: 8.06%
 - Waste Management: 2.56%

Voluntary Carbon Offsets:

- Private projects, like afforestation, can generate carbon credits.
- These credits can be sold internationally to companies needing offsets for regulatory compliance.

India's Climate Commitment:

- India aims to reduce its emissions intensity to 45% of 2005 levels by 2030.

India's First Biannual Transparency Report (BTR)

- Being prepared under the 2015 Paris Agreement obligations.
- Will undergo technical review by UNFCCC-accredited experts.

Context :

- BTR is a new reporting requirement for all signatories of the Paris Agreement.
- Previously, only developed nations were required to submit such reports.
- The COP 2024 in Baku marked the first official submission of BTRs.

Forest & Tree Cover:

- Sequestered 522 million tonnes CO₂ (offset 22% of total emissions).

Blue-Cheeked Bee-Eater (*Merops persicus*) Breeding Discovery

- Confirmed to breed in Peninsular India for the first time (Previously known as a passage migrant and winter visitor in India and Breeding regions: Nile Delta (Egypt), Pakistan, Iran).
- Location: Saltpans of Aandivilai, near Manakudy Mangroves, Kanniyakumari district, Tamil Nadu

Characteristics of the Blue-Cheeked Bee-Eater

- Scientific Name: *Merops persicus*.
- Appearance (Vibrant green plumage, Distinctive blue cheek patch, Elegant tail streamers enhance its graceful look)

COP16 (Convention on Biological Diversity)

- Held in Rome, Italy. from February 25-27, 2025.

- Objective: Secure financial and policy commitments to protect biodiversity

Key Agenda Items

- Launch of the Cali Fund to ensure fair financial benefits from Digital Sequence Information (DSI)
- Support for Indigenous communities and biodiversity conservation
- Finalizing decisions under the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework to halt biodiversity loss and restore ecosystems by 2030

Gharial Conservation

- IUCN - critically endangered.
- Under Schedule I of the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 (WPA).
- Madhya Pradesh hosts 80% of India's gharials (2,456 in Chambal Sanctuary, 2024 Census).
- **Five main sanctuaries:** Chambal (Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh), Katarniaghat (Uttar Pradesh), Chitwan (Nepal), Son River (Madhya Pradesh), Satkosia Gorge (Odisha).
- **Cultural Significance :** Sacred in Indian mythology; often depicted as the mount of Goddess Ganga

- **Context :** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister released 10 gharials (9 males, 1 female) into Chambal River on Feb 17, 2025, to boost the population

Olive Ridley turtle

- A 16-year-long study (2008-2024) on India's turtle populations, led by Dakshin Foundation, IISc Bengaluru, and State Forest Departments, finds that Olive Ridley turtles are stable or growing.
- other species of sea turtles found in the Indian territory - the leatherback turtles of the Andaman and Nicobar islands and the Green Turtles of the Lakshadweep islands
- Operation Olivia: Indian Coast Guard initiative (since the 1980s) to protect nesting turtles and prevent illegal trawling.
- Wildlife Protection Act, 1972: Schedule 1
- IUCN Red List: Vulnerable

Mass Nesting (Arribada)

- Gahirmatha and Rushikulya (Odisha) are among the largest nesting sites globally.
- Other nesting spots in India - Gahirmatha beach, and Devi river mouth in Odisha, the Andaman Islands and Tamil Nadu's beaches

3.2 MISCELLANEOUS

Tribes of Koraput

- **Indigenous Communities-** Koraput district in Odisha
- **Agricultural Practices** - dependent on shifting cultivation, now shifting towards sustainable farming with crop diversity

- Traditional healing systems using medicinal plants.
- Unique folk music, dance, and handicrafts
- **Other tribes from Odisha** - Paroja, Bonda, Gadaba, Kandha, and Saora.



4. ECONOMICS

4.1 CURRENT TRENDS IN INDIAN ECONOMY

▪ India's Digital Economy

- India's telecom sector is the second-largest globally.
- India is the third-largest start-up hub globally, with significant growth in AI, machine learning, and digital sectors.
- UPI has set global standards in digital transactions, contributing to a digital revolution.
- The government is focused on technological

and economic development to achieve the vision of a developed India by 2047, following the principle of "Initiate, Improve, and Transform (IIT).

- India aims to reach Rs.50,000 crore in defence exports by 2029.
- **Current Status:** Achieved 88% self-sufficiency in ammunition production; defence exports stood at Rs.23,000 crore in 2023-24.

4.2 REPORTS AND INDICES

Unemployment and Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)

- (PLFS) released by the Statistics and Programme Implementation Ministry
- The unemployment rate in urban areas of the country was 6.4% for the period of October to December in 2024 for persons of age 15 and above.
- In 2023 the unemployment rate for the cohort was 6.5%, while in the July-to-September 2024 quarter, it was 6.4%. The female unemployment rate last year was 8.6%.

Definition

- The PLFS defines unemployment rate as the percentage of unemployed persons in the labour force in current weekly status (CWS).
- The number of persons either employed or unemployed on an average in a week.

Unemployment Rate (Oct-Dec 2024)

- Highest: Himachal Pradesh - 10.4% (Female UR: 24%)
- Lowest: Gujarat - 3%
- The female unemployment rate too was the highest in Himachal Pradesh at 24%. The lowest was 1.3% in Delhi.

Employment Distribution by Category

- Self-Employed: 39.9%
- Regular Wage/Salaried Employees: 49.4%
- Casual Labourers: 10.7%

Sector-Wise Employment Distribution

- **Agriculture** : 5.5%
- **Secondary Sector (Manufacturing, Mining, etc.)** : 31.8%
- **Tertiary Sector (Services)** : 62.7%

The National Statistical System -2024

Data Collections and Records

- The National Statistical System, under the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, has created new modernized databases and record collections
- This is a compilation of approximately 270 databases and records obtained from extensive sources across 40 central government ministries and departments, covering various sectors including agriculture, health, education, labor, rural development, tourism, social justice, and banking.

About the Ministry of Statistics and Programme

- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation was formed in 1999. It has two major divisions:
 - **Statistics Division:** Central Statistics Office, Information Technology Division, National Sample Survey Office
 - **Programme Implementation Division:** Twenty Point Programme, Infrastructure Monitoring, MP Local Area Development Scheme

Time Use Survey 2024

- Conducted by the **National Statistics Office (NSO)** under the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**
- Survey covered **1,39,487** households (Both **Rural: 83,247** & **Urban: 56,240**)
- Included **4,54,192** individuals aged 6 and above.

Employment Participation

- Women's participation in employment-related activities increased to **25% (from 21.8% in 2019)**.
- Men's participation rose to **75% (from 70.9% in 2019)**.

Panchayat Devolution Index (PDI)

- Tamil Nadu ranked third at the all-India level with a score of 68.38, behind Karnataka (72.23) and Kerala (70.59).
- Study conducted by Union Panchayati Raj Ministry & Indian Institute of Public Administration (IIPA).
- Report as 6 dimension - framework, functions, finances, functionaries, capacity enhancement/ building, and accountability.
- The study revealed that as for Tamil Nadu, the share of panchayats' revenue in the State's Own Revenue was 0.31% during 2021-22.
- Tamil Nadu has the highest score at the national level with 60.24 with regard to the dimension of "functions," one of the six dimensions scrutinised to assess the performance of 28 States and seven Union Territories
- The Tamil Nadu Panchayat Act, 1994, was enacted with the primary goal of furthering the objective of decentralized democracy and making the systems and institutions of local self-governance solid and formal.
- The Act deals with multiple aspects, like the creation, constitution, powers, and functions of various tiers of panchayat bodies in the state of Tamil Nadu.

4.3 TAX STRUCTURE IN INDIA

India's High Import Tariffs

- India's average import tariff in 2023 was 17%, five times higher than the U.S. (3.3%).
- India had the highest average tariff among BRICS nations
- The agricultural, dairy products, beverages, and tobacco continue to attract more than 30% as import duty
- Duty on transport equipment, cotton, and textiles came down between 2018 and 2023
- **Brazil:** 11%
- **South Africa & China :** 7%
- **Russia :** 6.6%
- **Transport Equipment:** 28.2%
- **Cotton and Textiles:** 16%
- **Leather & Footwear:** 15.1%
- India is **exporting more to the U.S.**, increasing its trade surplus with the country.
- India refuses to negotiate agricultural tariffs (e.g., cereals) in Free Trade Agreements (FTAs), but this may change in U.S.-India trade talks.
- **India's exports to the U.S. crossed \$53 billion in FY25 (April-November).**
- U.S. share in India's total exports:
 - **2024-25: 18.6%**
 - **2015-16: 15%**
- Increasing trade surplus could lead to more tariff reduction demands from the U.S.





5. SCIENCE

5.1 LATEST INVENTIONS ON SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Multilingual AI hub

- The Union government has begun revamping its official websites and is working on an artificial intelligence hub to distribute information on government initiatives.
- The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) released a Digital Brand Identity Manual, seeking to create a standard design language for government websites.
- **Other initiatives include** : Digital India Bhashini, a language translation platform; BharatGen, the world's first government-funded multimodal large language model (LLM) initiative launched in 2024 the Sarvam-1 AI LLM
- Chitralkha, an open-source video transcreation platform
- Multilingual AI system Everest 1.0, which caters to various Indian languages

World's Largest Thrust Mixer Engine: ISRO

- In order to achieve self-reliance in the space sector, cryogenic engines are currently being developed domestically.
- In this context, ISRO has successfully developed the world's largest thrust mixer engine weighing 10 tons.

- It has been manufactured in collaboration with the Central Manufacturing Technology Institute (CMTI) located in Bangalore.

AMRSense

AI-Driven Tool for AMR Tracking

- It is an AI-powered tool to track antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in real time.
- Developed by the Researchers from IIIT-Delhi, CHRI-PATH, Tata 1mg, and ICMR
- It analyzes routine hospital data to predict resistance trends at global, national, and hospital levels.

Uses

- Affordable Alternative to Genomics (Traditional genomic methods - expensive; this AI model utilizes hospital reports cost-effectively)
- The AI tool enables early detection and intervention by predicting resistance trends.

India's First Wildlife Biobank

- Established at Padmaja Naidu Himalayan Zoological Park (PNHNP), Darjeeling.
- Operational since July 2024.
- In collaboration with Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), Ministry of Science & Technology.

Biobank Purpose & Storage:

- Preserves genetic materials (DNA, tissues, reproductive cells) from endangered species.
- Uses cryogenic storage (-196°C, liquid nitrogen) to ensure long-term viability.

Future Plans:

- Similar biobanks planned for Delhi Zoo & Nandankanan Zoo (Odisha).
- Potential role in species revival and genetic research.

Current Status (Feb 2025):

- Collected genetic materials from 60 animals across 23 species.

5.2 LATEST DISCOVERIES IN HEALTH SCIENCE

New mRNA-based personalized cancer vaccine

- Russia announced the development of a new mRNA-based personalized cancer vaccine,

What is mRNA (Messenger RNA)?

- mRNA is a type of RNA that transports genetic information from DNA to ribosomes, guiding the production of proteins.

- It tells the cell which proteins to make by providing the exact sequence of amino acids.

- This technology gained prominence with the COVID-19 vaccines (Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna) and is now being adapted for cancer treatment.

- These vaccines are therapeutic, designed for patients who already have cancer, not for prevention.

5.3 SPACE

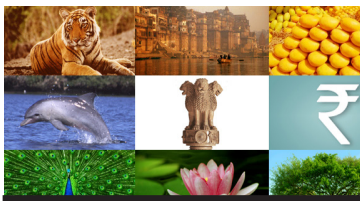
Sagittarius A (Sgr A) – Black hole

- The James Webb Space Telescope (JWST) has provided new insights into the supermassive black hole at the center of the Milky Way, Sagittarius A (Sgr A).

Key findings from the study include:

- Flickering Light & Flares: The telescope observed constant flickering from the accretion disk (the swirling gas around the black hole), with 1 to 3 large flares every 24 hours.

- James Webb Space Telescope (JWST)
- NASA's most advanced space observatory.
- Designed to explore the universe with unprecedented infrared sensitivity.
- Launched on December 25, 2021, it is a collaboration between NASA, the European Space Agency (ESA), and the Canadian Space Agency (CSA).



6. NATIONAL – DIARY OF EVENT

Bharat Tex - A Textile Industry Exhibition

- The textile industry's share in India's manufacturing sector is 11%.
- India's textile and garment exports saw a 7% growth in the last year.
- India ranks 6th among the world's largest textile and garment exporting countries.
- Currently, the value of textile exports is approximately Rs. 3 lakh crores, with a target to increase it to Rs. 9 lakh crores by 2030.

Aadi Mahotsav

- The National Tribal Festival 'Aadi Mahotsav' was inaugurated by the President of India
- It will be celebrated from **February 16 to 24**
- This is an flagship initiative of the **Tribal Co-operative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited (TRIFED)**
- Some of the important schemes for **Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs)**
- **PM-JANMAN Abhiyan (launched in 2023):** ensuring doorstep delivery of essential services.
- **Dharti Aba Janjati Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan** (launched on October 2, 2024):
 - Connecting 63,000 tribal villages to roads and mobile networks.
 - Providing permanent housing to tribal families.
 - Ensuring tribal citizens benefit from government welfare schemes.

Cheetah Reintroduction Project

- Five cheetahs were released in the Khajuri forest area of the Madhya Pradesh's Kuno National Park (KNP) .
- Part of India's **Cheetah Reintroduction Program** to restore the species after their extinction in India in 1952. (under Project Cheetah)
- This is the **world's first inter-continental wild carnivore** translocation project(The initiative is part of the world's first intercontinental translocation of cheetahs.).
- Under the program **Kuno National Park (KNP)** was chosen due to its suitable habitat.
- Total Cheetahs in KNP: Currently, 26 cheetahs are in Kuno National Park (8 from South Africa, 4 from Namibia, 14 cubs born in India)
- **Cheetah--IUCN status--Critically Endangered**

Kashi Tamil Sangamam 3.0

- The 3rd edition KTS 3.0, a cultural confluence between Tamil Nadu and Kashi, held in Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.
- The 1st edition of KTS was held in 2022, while the 2nd in 2023.
- The event aligns with the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat initiative.
- Nodal Ministry: The Ministry of Education in collaboration with various ministries and the Government of Uttar Pradesh.
- Indian traditions contribute to technological progress in fields like drone and space

technology – highlighted by the Indian External Affairs Minister .

- The historical ties between Kashi (Uttar Pradesh) and Tamil Nadu date back to the 15th century when King Parakrama Pandya of Madurai traveled to Kashi to bring back a sacred lingam for his temple (Sivakasi, Tamil Nadu).

International Conference On Women Peacekeepers

- India is hosting a two-day conference on women peacekeepers at UN missions from February 24-25, 2025, in New Delhi.
- Theme: “Women in Peacekeeping: A Global South Perspective”.
- The event will highlight the contributions of women peacekeepers from the Global South.
- Participants: Women peacekeepers from 35 troop-contributing countries.
- **Organizers** : Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Ministry of Defence, Centre for United Nations Peacekeeping.

Tapentadol and Carisoprodol

- The Health Ministry has banned the export of Tapentadol and Carisoprodol-containing drugs following unapproved exports by Aveo Pharmaceuticals, Mumbai, to West Africa.
- These drugs are individually approved in India but their combination is not authorized.
- They are also not listed under the NDPS Act.
- **Tapentadol**: An opioid painkiller for moderate to severe pain
- **Carisoprodol**: A muscle relaxant that acts on the brain and spinal cord.

Bay of Bengal Inter-Governmental Organisation

- India has recently assumed the Chairmanship of the Bay of Bengal Inter-Governmental Organisation (BOBP-IGO) from Bangladesh.
- This transition took place during the 13th Governing Council Meeting held in Malé, Maldives.
- The event was part of a high-level conference focused on mainstreaming ecosystem approaches to fisheries management in small-scale fisheries.

About BOBP-IGO

- The BOBP-IGO was established in 2003.
- This Regional Fisheries Advisory Body (RFAB) gives advice on fishing to countries around the Bay of Bengal.
- Its primary aim is to assist member countries in enhancing livelihood opportunities for small-scale fisherfolk in the Bay of Bengal region.
- Current member countries include Bangladesh, Maldives, and Sri Lanka.
- Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, and Thailand participate as cooperating non-contracting parties.

Prakriti 2025 - International Conference on Carbon Markets

- Prakriti 2025 (Promoting Resilience, Awareness, Knowledge, and Resources for Integrating Transformational Initiatives) was organized by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) under the Ministry of Power and the Ministry of Environment, Forest, and Climate Change .

Held in New Delhi

- The conference focused on global carbon market trends, policy frameworks, and financing mechanisms to support climate goals.

National Conference on 'Sustainable Cooling and Doubling the Rate of Energy Efficiency Improvement

- Held on February 21-22, 2025, in New Delhi.
- Organized by BEE and PFI under the Ministry of Power
- the event aimed to accelerate energy efficiency and sustainable cooling solutions in India
- emphasizing India's power sector progress, with non-fossil fuel capacity at 47.15% and emission intensity reduced by 36%.

About the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE)

- The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) was established on March 1, 2002, under the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.
- It operates under the Ministry of Power, Government of India and aims to enhance energy efficiency across various sectors
- Its primary objective is to reduce the energy intensity of the Indian economy through policy-making, regulations, and market-driven initiatives.

SARAS Ajeevika Mela 2025

- **Organized by:** Ministry of Rural Development in collaboration with **National Institute of**

Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR) at Uttar Pradesh.

- **Objective:** To showcase and promote the crafts, arts, and products of rural India, especially those made by **Self-Help Groups (SHGs)**.

- **Theme:** Tradition, Art, and Culture & "Developing the Export Potential of Lakhpati SHG Didis."

- **Launched under Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana** - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) to promote inclusive growth and economic self-sufficiency for rural artisans and craftsmen.

Customs Department, GST Officials Get Arrest Powers

- The Supreme Court confirmed that legislative amendments granting arrest powers to Customs and Goods and Services Tax (GST) officials are constitutionally valid
- In 2011, the Supreme Court had ruled that before making arrests under the **Customs Act of 1944 and Central Excise Act**, officials must obtain warrants from a judicial magistrate as per the Criminal Procedure Code
- Following this ruling, the central government made amendments under Section 104 of the Customs Act
- Similarly, under the GST Act of 2017, officials have been granted arrest powers in specific cases. Around 280 petitions were filed regarding this issue



7. INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

World's First Person with Disability to Visit International Space Station

- The European Space Agency has approved John McFall as the world's first astronaut with a disability to visit the International Space Station (ISS).
- In 2006, he won silver medal in 100 meters and bronze medal in 200 meters at the International Paralympic Committee's World Athletics Championships in the Netherlands.
- In 2007, he won gold medal in 200 meters at the Visa Paralympic World Cup held in Britain.

India-Qatar 7 Agreements

- India and Qatar Signed Seven Memorandums of Understanding were signed regarding the establishment of bilateral strategic partnership, revised agreement on avoidance of double taxation and prevention of financial fraud, economic cooperation, collaboration in archives and documentation, cooperation in youth welfare and sports, between Invest India and Invest Qatar, and between Confederation of Indian Industry and Qatari Businessmen Association.

About Qatar

- Capital: Doha
- Currency: Qatari Riyal
- Prime Minister: Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani

USAID Funding in India (FY 2023-24)

- The Finance Ministry's annual report for 2023-24 reveals that The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) allocated \$97 million for seven projects in India in 2023-24.
- **Project Areas:** Funding was directed toward agriculture, food security, WASH (water, sanitation, and hygiene), renewable energy, disaster management, health, climate adaptation, and energy efficiency technology commercialization.
- **No Funding for Voter Turnout** (Voter Turnout means it is a crucial electoral tool for real-time tracking and monitoring of voter participation systematically).



8. TAMILNADU AFFAIRS

'Antiquity of Iron'

- The report titled 'Antiquity of Iron: Recent radiometric dates from Tamil Nadu' was released by the Department of Archaeology, Government of Tamil Nadu
- The report claims that the Iron Age in Tamil Nadu began in the first quarter of the 4th millennium BCE, over 5,300 years ago.

Keeladi

- Keeladi, a hamlet in Sivaganga district, 12 kilometers southeast of Madurai.
- Excavations started Since 2015.
- it has Evidence of an urban civilization on the banks of the Vaigai River.
- Hundreds of potsherds containing Tamil Brahmi inscriptions.

Sivagalai

- Excavations Conducted by TNSDA in Sivagalai, Thoothukudi district, between 2019 and 2022.
- It has Paddy sample from an urn dated back to 1,155 BCE.

Gangaikondacholapuram

- a few kilometres north of Kollidam River in Ariyalur district.
- Capital of the Cholas for about 250 years.
- City built by Rajendra Chola after his victorious expedition up to the Gangetic plains.
- Maligaimedu (the mound of a palace), located about 2 km away from the Brihadisvara Temple, a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Kodumanal

- Kodumanal, on the northern banks of the Noyyal River, about 15 km from Chennimalai in Erode district.
- Referred to as Kodumanam in Pathitru Pathu of Sangam literature.
- Connected Karur, the capital of Cheras, with Muziris, an ancient port town currently in Kerala.
- Shell bangles, coins, potsherds inscribed with Tamil Brahmi scripts.
- A menhir (standing stone) and a few megalithic burial sites.

National Green Tribunal has directed Tambaram Corporation.

- The Southern Bench of the National Green Tribunal has directed the Tamil Nadu Water Supply and Drainage (TWAD) Board to submit a comprehensive plan to tackle the ongoing water contamination issues in the Tambaram Corporation.
- The samples were sent to the State Level Water Quality Testing Laboratory in Chepauk, Chennai, for analysis.

About

- The National Green Tribunal has been established in 2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act, 2010
- The Tribunal is mandated to make and endeavour for disposal of applications or appeals finally within 6 months of filing of the case.

- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has five regional benches,
 - **North Zone:** The principal bench in Delhi
 - **Central Zone:** The bench in Bhopal
 - **East Zone:** The bench in Kolkata
 - **South Zone:** The bench in Chennai
 - **West Zone:** The bench in Pune

Tamil Nadu Lok Ayukta Chairman Appointment

- Retired Justice P. Raja Manickam has been appointed as the chairman of the Lok Ayukta

About Lok Ayukta

- Tamil Nadu Lok Ayukta was established on 13.11.2018
- The Lok Ayukta institution is established to investigate corruption complaints against public servants
- Consists of one chairman, 2 judicial members, and 2 non-judicial members
- Term: 5 years or until 70 years of age

Selvamagal Savings Account Scheme: Chennai City Postal Division Achievement

- The Chennai City Postal Division has reported that more than 10 lakh new savings accounts have been opened under the Selvamagal Savings Account Scheme until January of the current year
- The scheme was launched by the Central Government in 2015 for the welfare of girl children
- Under this scheme, parents can open accounts for girls under 10 years of age with a minimum deposit of Rs.250 and maximum of Rs.1.5 lakh per financial year

Tamil Nadu Fiber Net project

- "Tamil Nadu IT Minister has stated that under the Tamil Nadu Fiber Net project, with support from the Central Government's BharatNet project, there are plans to connect more than 12,000 villages.
- "The National Optical Fibre Network (NOFN), launched in October 2011, was renamed the Bharat Net Project in 2015.
- It is an ambitious project of the Government of India to provide broadband connectivity to all village panchayats in the country.

Uvagai' Grand Festival; Tamil Development Department

- The World Tamil Association Grammar Award for 2023 was presented to Sellathamphi Sreekantharasa from Britain, the World Tamil Association Literary Award to Pichinikkadu Ilango from Singapore, and the World Tamil Association Linguistics Award to Thalinjan Murugaiah from France by the Minister of Tamil Development and Information Department.

'Chief Minister's Pharmacy' Scheme

- This scheme has been launched in all 38 districts. A total of 1,000 'Chief Minister's Pharmacies' will be opened - 500 through entrepreneurs and 500 through the Cooperative Department.
- A total of 274 types of generic medicines, branded medicines, and nutrition packages have been procured. The Cooperative and Public Health Departments purchase and distribute medicines.
- People with diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease need to take pills daily. Beneficiaries can save 50 to 75 percent monthly on medicine purchases.

- Medicines will be delivered by vehicles within 48 hours of receiving the prescription list.

'Kalangkarai' Integrated Addiction Recovery Treatment and Rehabilitation Center

- The Chief Minister inaugurated 'Kalangkarai' Integrated Addiction Recovery Treatment and Rehabilitation Centers in 25 Government Medical College Hospitals across Tamil Nadu.
- **Aim :** To completely rehabilitate those affected by substance abuse and maintain their physical and mental health necessary for them to live well in society.
- **Nodal agency :** Tamil Nadu State health Policy and Public Health Department
- Deep sea region identified in T.N. for oil, gas exploration.
- The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has identified potential hydrocarbon reserves in deep sea areas off the coasts of Tamil Nadu in the Gulf of Mannar, covering Ramanathapuram and Thoothukudi districts
- The Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve is home to rare and endangered species such as dugongs, turtles, and marine mammals.

Tamil Nadu State Policy for Care of Homeless Persons with Mental Illness (HPWMI) – 2024

- **Objective** - Ensure holistic care for HPWMI, from rescue to rehabilitation and social reintegration
- This policy is India's first comprehensive framework to streamline mental health care for the homeless, ensuring multi-department coordination and long-term social security.
- **Four Levels of Care for HPWMI:**
 - Rescue & Acute Care – Emergency response and medical intervention.
 - Intermediary Care – Recovery centers with psychiatric treatment and vocational training.
 - Long-Term Care – Sustained medical and social support.
 - Social Reintegration – Rehabilitation with livelihood and welfare benefits.
- **Helpline** - 102 designated as the official rescue helpline. Other helplines involved: 100 (Police), 104, 14416 (Health), 181 (Women Helpline).