



*The*  
**ACHIEVERS**  
IAS ACADEMY  
PATNA

*Daily*  
**NEWS CHRONICLE**

**IDEAL FOR**

For UPSC/BPSC & For other Exams

**English**

**NEWS CREDIT**

PIB/ PTI/ News On Air/ The Hindu/ IANS/ Business Standard/ Times Of India/ Deccan Herald/ Hindustan Times/ BBC News/ Aljazeera/ Mirror.Uk/ Times Now/ Economic Times/ Financial Express/ Indian Express...

**NEWS COVERED**

Business News, financial news, economy news, company news, politics news, India news, breaking news, Indian economy, International News, Sports News, and many more topics...



**Thursday, July 23, 2026**



+91 8434931877



[www.achieversiaspatna.co.in](http://www.achieversiaspatna.co.in)



[achieversiaspatna@gmail.com](mailto:achieversiaspatna@gmail.com)



**Top Stories of The Day**

- India to Double ITEC Training Slots for *North Macedonia* to Boost Bilateral Cooperation and Capacity Building.
- MIB Launches '*Gems of India*' Challenge to Promote Grassroots Digital Creators Through MyWAVES Platform.
- France Passes Law *Banning Social Media* Use for Children Under 15 to Protect Online Safety.
- Ukraine Appoints *Mykhailo Drapaty* as *New Military Chief* Amid Ongoing Russia-Ukraine Conflict.
- *US Imposes 50% Tariff* on Canadian Imports Amid Rising Trade Dispute.
- Delhi Approves *PARIVARTAN Scheme* to Replace Polluting Vehicles with BS-VI and Electric Vehicles.
- *Karlapat Bauxite Block* in Odisha Gains Importance for India's Aluminium Industry Growth.
- Centre Reopens Option for Eligible NPS Employees to Shift to *Old Pension Scheme*.
- IIT Kanpur to Establish *Green Hydrogen Centre* of Excellence ECOGEN for Clean Energy Research.
- Maharashtra to Develop *India's First AI-Powered Bird Sanctuary* at Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary.

## India to Double ITEC Training Slots for North Macedonia: President Droupadi Murmu



- During the State Visit of President of North Macedonia Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova to India, President Droupadi Murmu announced that India will double the Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) training slots for North Macedonia.
- The move aims to strengthen bilateral cooperation in capacity building, education, digital technologies, governance, and human resource development under India's development partnership initiatives.
- The decision reflects India's growing engagement with the Balkan region and reinforces bilateral relations with North Macedonia.

### What is ITEC?

- Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) is India's flagship capacity-building programme for partner countries.

### Key Facts:

- Launched: 1964
- Administered by: Ministry of External Affairs (MEA)
- Nature: Fully funded assistance programme.
- Coverage: More than 160 partner countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Pacific and the Caribbean.

### Objectives:

- Human resource development.
- Technical training.
- Capacity building.
- Sharing India's developmental experience.
- South-South Cooperation.

### Major Components:

- Civilian training programmes.
- Defence training.
- Expert deputation.
- Study tours.
- Disaster relief assistance.
- Project assistance.
- E-ITEC (online learning platform).

### India-North Macedonia Relations:

- Diplomatic Relations
- Diplomatic relations established in 1995.
- India's Embassy in Sofia (Bulgaria) is concurrently accredited to North Macedonia.
- North Macedonia maintains an Embassy in New Delhi.

### Areas of Cooperation:

- Capacity building through ITEC.
- Pharmaceuticals.
- Information Technology.
- Agriculture.
- Renewable Energy.
- Education.
- Culture.
- Trade and Investment.

### About North Macedonia:

- Capital: Skopje
- Currency: Macedonian Denar (MKD)



|                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Continent: Europe (Balkan Peninsula)                       |
| • President: Gordana Siljanovska-Davkova                     |
| • Prime Minister: Hristijan Mickoski                         |
| • Member of NATO: Since 2020                                 |
| • EU Status: Candidate country for European Union membership |

### Additional Facts:

- ITEC is one of India's oldest and most successful development cooperation programmes, launched in 1964.
- The programme embodies India's philosophy of "Development Partnership" and South-South Cooperation.
- India provides thousands of fully funded training opportunities annually to officials from partner countries.
- North Macedonia became the 30th member of NATO on 27 March 2020.
- The country changed its name from the Republic of Macedonia to the Republic of North Macedonia in 2019 under the Prespa Agreement with Greece.
- Mother Teresa was born in Skopje (present-day North Macedonia) in 1910, before becoming an Indian citizen and Nobel Peace Prize laureate.

**Important Development Partnership Programmes of India:**

|                                                                    |                                   |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| • Programme                                                        | : Purpose                         |
| • ITEC: Capacity building and technical cooperation                |                                   |
| • e-ITEC: Online education and training                            |                                   |
| • ICCR Scholarships: Educational scholarships for foreign students |                                   |
| • Pan-African e-Network / e-VBAB                                   | : Tele-education and telemedicine |
| • Lines of Credit (LoCs): Infrastructure and development financing |                                   |

### Exam Focus Points:

|                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------|
| • ITEC launched: 1964.                                 |
| • Implementing Ministry: Ministry of External Affairs. |
| • Beneficiary Country in News: North Macedonia.        |
| • Capital: Skopje.                                     |
| • Currency: Macedonian Denar.                          |
| • NATO Membership: 2020.                               |
| • Former Name: Republic of Macedonia.                  |
| • Prespa Agreement: 2018 (implemented in 2019).        |
| • Mother Teresa's birthplace: Skopje.                  |

## MIB Launches 'Gems of India' to Promote Grassroots Digital Creators



- The Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB) has launched the pilot phase of the 'Gems of India' Challenge, a nationwide initiative

aimed at identifying, nurturing, and promoting grassroots digital creators.

- The challenge encourages citizens to create short videos showcasing the culture, heritage, tourism, traditions, history, and unique achievements of their respective districts through the MyWAVES platform under the WAVES OTT ecosystem.

### Key Highlights

- Video Duration: 1–3 minutes.



- Partners: YouTube and Meta will support creator outreach through their creator ecosystems.

#### **Pilot Regions:**

|                                        |
|----------------------------------------|
| • Andaman & Nicobar Islands            |
| • Arunachal Pradesh                    |
| • Chandigarh                           |
| • Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu |
| • Goa                                  |
| • Ladakh.                              |

#### **Award Structure:**

|                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Level: Award                                                      |
| • District: Up to 20 awards of ₹50,000 each per district            |
| • State: ₹2 lakh for one creator from each district                 |
| • National: ₹5 lakh for selected creators during nationwide rollout |

#### **Implementation Partners:**

|                                                |
|------------------------------------------------|
| • Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.      |
| • Prasar Bharati.                              |
| • My Bharat (MY Bharat).                       |
| • State Governments.                           |
| • District Administrations.                    |
| • Local educational and cultural institutions. |
| • YouTube.                                     |
| • Meta.                                        |

#### **About MyWAVES:**

- A citizen creator platform under the WAVES OTT ecosystem.

#### **Launched to enable citizens to:**

- Create original content.
- Upload and share videos.
- Promote India's cultural diversity.
- Supports user-generated content and India's growing digital creator economy.

#### **About WAVES:**

- WAVES (World Audio Visual & Entertainment Summit) is India's flagship initiative to promote the Media & Entertainment (M&E) sector and strengthen the country's creative economy.
- Supported by the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.
- Promotes innovation in: Digital media, Broadcasting, AVGC-XR (Animation, Visual Effects, Gaming, Comics, Extended Reality), Films, Music & Content creation.

#### **What is the Orange Economy?**

- The Orange Economy refers to economic activities based on creativity, culture, intellectual property, and digital innovation.

#### **Major Sectors**

|                             |
|-----------------------------|
| • Film and television.      |
| • Music.                    |
| • Digital content creation. |
| • Gaming.                   |
| • Animation.                |
| • Publishing.               |
| • Advertising.              |
| • Cultural tourism.         |
| • Design and fashion.       |

#### **About the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB):**

|                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Headquarters: New Delhi                                                                                                   |
| • Minister: Ashwini Vaishnaw                                                                                                |
| • Major Organisations: Prasar Bharati, PIB, CBFC, NFDC, Directorate of Advertising & Visual Publicity (DAVP, now under CBC) |

#### **Additional Facts:**

- Prasar Bharati is a statutory autonomous body established under the Prasar Bharati Act, 1990 (operational since 1997).



- Prasar Bharati operates: Akashvani (All India Radio). & Doordarshan.
- Press Information Bureau (PIB) functions under the Ministry of Information & Broadcasting as the Government of India's principal information dissemination agency.
- CBFC (Central Board of Film Certification) certifies films under the Cinematograph Act, 1952.
- The Digital India Mission was launched in 2015 to transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.

|                                                        |
|--------------------------------------------------------|
| • Ministry: Ministry of Information & Broadcasting.    |
| • Initiative: Gems of India Challenge.                 |
| • Platform: MyWAVES under WAVES OTT.                   |
| • Theme: District-level digital storytelling.          |
| • Pilot Coverage: Six States/UTs.                      |
| • Partners: YouTube and Meta.                          |
| • Highest National Award: ₹5 lakh.                     |
| • Related Concept: Orange Economy.                     |
| • Implementing Partners: Prasar Bharati and MY Bharat. |

### Exam Focus Points:

## France Passes Landmark Bill Restricting Social Media Use by Children Under 15



- France's Parliament has approved a landmark law prohibiting children below the age of 15 from accessing social media platforms, making France the first European Union (EU) country to adopt such a nationwide restriction. The legislation aims to protect children from the harmful effects of excessive social media use, including cyberbullying, addiction, and mental health issues.

### Why is it in News?

- France has become the first EU member state to enact a nationwide law banning social media use for children under 15.
- The legislation reflects growing global concerns over children's online safety and digital well-being.

- The European Commission will examine whether the law is fully compatible with the EU Digital Services Act (DSA).

### Major Provisions of the Law:

- Children below 15 years cannot create or maintain social media accounts.

### Social media companies must:

- Verify users' ages.
- Remove existing accounts of underage users.
- The law also complements France's broader measures to reduce excessive screen time among children.
- The government has promoted the measure as part of its child protection and responsible digital citizenship agenda.

### About the European Union (EU):

|                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------|
| • Established: 1993 (Treaty of Maastricht)         |
| • Headquarters: Brussels, Belgium                  |
| • Member States: 27                                |
| • President of the European Council: António Costa |
| • Parliament Seat: Strasbourg, France              |
| • Executive Body: European Commission              |



- |                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Court: Court of Justice of the European Union (Luxembourg)</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Currency: Euro (€) (used by 20 member states)</li></ul>              |

What is the EU Digital Services Act (DSA)?

- The Digital Services Act (DSA) is a landmark European Union regulation designed to create a safer digital environment.

Key Objectives:

- Protect users' fundamental rights online.
- Increase transparency of online platforms.
- Regulate very large online platforms (VLOPs).
- Remove illegal content more effectively.
- Protect children from harmful digital content.
- Improve accountability of technology companies.

About France:

- |                                                                                        |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capital: Paris</li></ul>                       |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Currency: Euro (€)</li></ul>                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• President: Emmanuel Macron</li></ul>           |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• National Day: 14 July (Bastille Day)</li></ul> |

Additional Facts:

- France is a founding member of the European Union and NATO.
- The EU Digital Services Act (DSA) became fully applicable in 2024 to strengthen regulation of online platforms.
- Australia became the first country globally to legislate a nationwide minimum age for social

media use (under 16), influencing similar debates worldwide.

- The European Commission acts as the executive arm of the EU and ensures the implementation of EU laws.
- The Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU), located in Luxembourg, interprets EU law and ensures its uniform application across member states.
- Comparison: Digital Regulation Initiatives
- Country/Region: Major Initiative
- France: Ban on social media for children under 15
- Australia: Social media ban for children under 16
- European Union: Digital Services Act (DSA)
- India: Digital Personal Data Protection Act, 2023 and IT Act, 2000 regulate aspects of digital governance and online safety

Exam Focus Points:

- |                                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Country in News: France.</li></ul>                                      |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Age Limit: Under 15 years.</li></ul>                                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Objective: Child online safety and mental health protection.</li></ul>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Related EU Law: Digital Services Act (DSA).</li></ul>                   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EU Headquarters: Brussels.</li></ul>                                    |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• European Parliament Seat: Strasbourg.</li></ul>                         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EU Court: Court of Justice of the European Union, Luxembourg.</li></ul> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• President of France: Emmanuel Macron.</li></ul>                         |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Capital of France: Paris.</li></ul>                                     |

Ukraine Appoints Mykhailo Drapatyi as New Commander-in-Chief of Armed Forces

- Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has dismissed General Oleksandr Syrskyi as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine and appointed Major General Mykhailo Drapatyi as his successor.

- The leadership change comes amid public protests and demands for military reforms during the ongoing Russia–Ukraine conflict.

About Mykhailo Drapatyi:

- Rank: Major General.



- Veteran of the Russo-Ukrainian War since 2014.
- Previously served as Commander of the Ukrainian Ground Forces.
- Known for leadership during operations in Mariupol, Kherson, Kryvyi Rih, and Kharkiv.
- Considered part of a new generation of Ukrainian military commanders focused on innovation and operational flexibility.



About Ukraine:

- |                                  |
|----------------------------------|
| • Capital: Kyiv                  |
| • Currency: Hryvnia (UAH)        |
| • President: Volodymyr Zelenskyy |

Russia–Ukraine Conflict: Timeline

| Year      | Event                                                                                                                   |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 2014      | Russia annexed Crimea; conflict began in eastern Ukraine (Donbas).                                                      |
| 2022      | Russia launched a full-scale invasion of Ukraine.                                                                       |
| 2023–2026 | Continued military operations, international sanctions on Russia, and extensive Western military assistance to Ukraine. |

NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization)

- Established: 1949.
- Headquarters: Brussels, Belgium.
- Secretary General: Mark Rutte
- Chair of the NATO Military Committee: Giuseppe Cavo Dragone

- Collective defence principle under Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty.
- Ukraine is not a NATO member, but cooperates closely with the alliance.

European Union (EU):

- Ukraine was granted EU candidate status in 2022.
- Accession negotiations formally began in 2024.

Black Sea:

- Bordered by Ukraine, Russia, Romania, Bulgaria, Türkiye, and Georgia.
- Connected to the Mediterranean Sea through the Bosphorus, Sea of Marmara, and Dardanelles.
- Strategically important for global trade, energy transport, and regional security.

Sea of Azov:

- Connected to the Black Sea through the Kerch Strait.
- Important maritime region in the Russia–Ukraine conflict.

Exam Focus Points:

|                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------|
| • Country: Ukraine.                               |
| • President: Volodymyr Zelenskyy.                 |
| • New Commander-in-Chief: Mykhailo Drapatyi.      |
| • Former Commander: Oleksandr Syrskiy.            |
| • Capital: Kyiv.                                  |
| • Currency: Hryvnia.                              |
| • Parliament: Verkhovna Rada.                     |
| • Related Organizations: NATO, European Union.    |
| • Important Water Bodies: Black Sea, Sea of Azov. |



- The United States has announced a 50% tariff on selected Canadian imports, alleging that Canada discriminates against American products.
- The new duties are scheduled to come into force 30 days after the announcement, further escalating trade tensions between the two North American partners.
- The measure has been announced by U.S. President Donald Trump under Section 338 of the U.S. Tariff Act of 1930, a rarely invoked trade provision.

**The U.S. alleges that Canada has discriminated against American goods such as:**

- Dairy products
- Alcoholic beverages
- Automobiles

### What is a Tariff?

- A tariff is a tax imposed by a government on imported goods and services.

### Objectives of Tariffs:

- Protect domestic industries.
- Generate government revenue.
- Reduce imports.
- Correct trade imbalances.
- Counter unfair trade practices.
- Strengthen negotiating leverage in trade disputes.

### Types of Tariffs:

- Ad Valorem Tariff – Levied as a percentage of the value of goods.
- Specific Tariff – Fixed amount per unit imported.
- Protective Tariff – Protects domestic industries.
- Revenue Tariff – Primarily imposed to generate revenue.
- Retaliatory Tariff – Imposed in response to another country's trade restrictions.

### About Section 338 of the U.S. Tariff Act, 1930:

- Enacted under the Tariff Act (Smoot–Hawley Tariff Act), 1930.
- Authorizes the U.S. President to impose additional duties on imports from countries that discriminate against U.S. commerce.
- It is a rarely used provision in U.S. trade law.

### About the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA):

- Signed: 30 November 2018
- Came into Force: 1 July 2020
- Members: United States, Canada, Mexico
- Replaced: North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)
- Objective: Promote free trade, investment, and regional economic integration

### India–Canada Trade Relations:

- Particular: Details
- Bilateral Merchandise Trade: Around US\$8–9 billion annually (recent years)
- Major Indian Exports: Pharmaceuticals, textiles, machinery, gems & jewellery
- Major Imports from Canada: Pulses, fertilizers, wood pulp, minerals
- Proposed Agreement: Early Progress Trade Agreement (EPTA) under discussion

### World Trade Organization (WTO):



|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Established: 1 January 1995</li> <li>Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland</li> <li>Members: 166 (as of 2026)</li> <li>Successor to: General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), 1947</li> <li>Objective: Promote free, fair, and predictable international trade</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tariff: Quota</li> <li>Tax imposed on imports: Quantitative limit on imports</li> <li>Generates government revenue: Does not directly generate revenue</li> <li>Imports continue after paying duty: Imports stop after quota limit is reached</li> </ul> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### Canada:

|                                                                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capital: Ottawa.</li> <li>Currency: Canadian Dollar (CAD).</li> <li>Prime Minister: Mark Carney.</li> </ul> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### United States:

|                                                                                                                                                     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capital: Washington, D.C.</li> <li>Currency: U.S. Dollar (USD).</li> <li>President: Donald Trump.</li> </ul> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### Exam Focus Points:

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Country imposing tariff: United States.</li> <li>Country affected: Canada.</li> <li>Tariff rate: 50%.</li> <li>Legal basis: Section 338 of the Tariff Act, 1930.</li> <li>Regional Trade Agreement: USMCA.</li> <li>Predecessor Agreement: NAFTA.</li> <li>Global Trade Organization: WTO.</li> <li>WTO Headquarters: Geneva, Switzerland.</li> </ul> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

### Difference Between Tariff and Quota:

## PARIVARTAN Scheme: Delhi Approves Replacement of Old Commercial Vehicles with BS-VI & Electric Vehicles



- The Delhi Cabinet has approved the implementation of the PARIVARTAN (Programme for Accelerated Renewal and Incentivization of Vehicle Assets for Reducing Transport Air Pollution and Network Emissions) Scheme, aimed at replacing old and highly polluting commercial vehicles with BS-VI-compliant or electric vehicles (EVs).
- The scheme is part of the Centre's broader strategy to reduce vehicular emissions and

improve air quality across the National Capital Region (NCR).

### Why is it in News?

- Delhi has become one of the first jurisdictions to operationalise the Centre's PARIVARTAN Scheme.
- The initiative is expected to significantly reduce emissions from heavy commercial vehicles, one of the major contributors to air pollution in the Delhi-NCR region.

### About PARIVARTAN Scheme

- Full Form: Programme for Accelerated Renewal and Incentivization of Vehicle Assets for Reducing Transport Air Pollution and Network Emissions

- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA).

- Uses cleaner fuel with 10 ppm sulphur, compared to 50 ppm in BS-IV.

### Objectives:

- Replace highly polluting commercial vehicles.
- Improve air quality in Delhi-NCR.
- Promote adoption of clean mobility technologies.
- Encourage fleet modernization.
- Support India's climate and sustainable transport goals.

### Major Features:

- Applicable to commercial trucks and buses operating in NCR.
- Encourages scrapping of BS-IV and older vehicles.

### Promotes:

- BS-VI diesel vehicles.
- BS-VI CNG buses.
- Electric commercial vehicles.
- Linked with fiscal incentives to reduce replacement costs.

### Vehicular Pollution in Delhi:

- Major Contributors
- Heavy commercial vehicles.
- Construction activities.
- Road dust.
- Industries.
- Biomass burning.
- Seasonal stubble burning.

### Pollutants:

- PM<sub>2.5</sub>
- PM<sub>10</sub>
- NO<sub>x</sub>
- SO<sub>2</sub>
- Carbon monoxide
- Ground-level ozone

### What is Bharat Stage (BS) Emission Standard?

- Bharat Stage (BS) norms are emission standards notified by the Government of India to regulate pollutants emitted by motor vehicles.
- Regulated by: Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH)
- Based on: European Euro emission standards
- Current Standard: Bharat Stage-VI (BS-VI)
- BS-VI Implemented: 1 April 2020

### Importance of BS-VI:

#### Reduces emissions of:

- Particulate Matter (PM).
- Nitrogen Oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>).
- Hydrocarbons.
- Carbon Monoxide.

### National Clean Air Programme (NCAP):

- Launched: 2019
- Ministry: Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC)
- Objective: Reduce particulate pollution in major cities through a city-specific action plan

### Vehicle Scrapping Policy (India):

- Launched: 2021
- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Road Transport & Highways
- Objective: Phase out old, unfit and polluting vehicles
- Benefits: Incentives for scrapping and purchasing new vehicles

### About Electric Vehicles (EVs):

#### Advantages



- Zero tailpipe emissions.
- Lower operating costs.
- Reduced dependence on fossil fuels.
- Improved urban air quality.
- Supports India's net-zero and energy security goals.

### Related Government Initiatives:

- FAME India Scheme (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles).
- PM E-DRIVE Scheme for electric mobility.
- Vehicle Scrapping Policy (2021).
- National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP) 2020.
- National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).

### Exam Focus Points:

## Karlapat Bauxite Block Emerges as Key Mineral Asset for India's Aluminium Industry



- The Karlapat Bauxite Block in Kalahandi district, Odisha, has emerged as one of India's most strategically significant mineral blocks, attracting major interest from leading aluminium producers.
- With an estimated over 200 million tonnes of bauxite reserves, the block is expected to strengthen India's aluminium value chain, enhance domestic raw material security, and reduce dependence on imported bauxite.

### Why is it in News?

- The Karlapat Bauxite Block has become a highly sought-after mineral block due to its large

|                                                                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Scheme: PARIVARTAN.                                                                                                                            |
| • Full Form: Programme for Accelerated Renewal and Incentivization of Vehicle Assets for Reducing Transport Air Pollution and Network Emissions. |
| • Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.                                                                                         |
| • Target Vehicles: BS-IV and older commercial trucks and buses.                                                                                  |
| • Replacement Vehicles: BS-VI, BS-VI CNG, and Electric Vehicles.                                                                                 |
| • Current Emission Norm: BS-VI.                                                                                                                  |
| • Vehicle Scrapping Policy: 2021.                                                                                                                |
| • Related Institutions: CAQM, NCRPB.                                                                                                             |
| • Related Programme: NCAP.                                                                                                                       |

reserve base and strategic importance for India's aluminium industry.

- The block is expected to play a crucial role in ensuring long-term raw material availability for aluminium manufacturing in India.

### Importance of Karlapat Bauxite Block

- One of India's largest undeveloped bauxite deposits.
- Ensures uninterrupted supply of raw material to alumina refineries.
- Reduces dependence on imported bauxite.
- Promotes value addition within India.
- Supports the Make in India initiative.
- Generates employment and regional economic development in Odisha.
- Strengthens India's position among the world's leading aluminium producers.

### About Bauxite

- Bauxite is the principal ore of aluminium.

### Major Minerals Present:

- Gibbsite
- Boehmite
- Diaspore

### Uses

- Aluminium production
- Aerospace industry
- Automobile manufacturing
- Electrical cables
- Packaging
- Defence equipment
- Construction sector
- Renewable energy infrastructure

### Aluminium Production Process:

- Stage: Product
- Bauxite: Ore
- Bayer Process: Alumina ( $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ )
- Hall-Héroult Process: Aluminium Metal

### India and Bauxite

- Global Position: Among the leading producers of bauxite
- Major Producing States: Odisha, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh
- Largest Producer State: Odisha
- Principal Use: Aluminium manufacturing

### Odisha: Mineral Powerhouse:

- Odisha is India's leading mineral-producing state.

### Major Minerals:

- Bauxite
- Iron Ore
- Chromite
- Coal
- Manganese

- Limestone
- Nickel

### Key Aluminium Belt:

- Kalahandi
- Koraput
- Rayagada
- Kandhamal

### Major Aluminium Companies in India:

- Company: Headquarters
- National Aluminium Company Limited (NALCO): Bhubaneswar
- Hindalco Industries Ltd.: Mumbai
- Vedanta Aluminium: Jharsuguda (major operations in Odisha)
- Bharat Aluminium Company (BALCO): Korba, Chhattisgarh

### Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 (MMDR Act):

#### Purpose

- Regulates mineral exploration and mining in India.
- Governs auction of mineral blocks.
- Encourages transparent allocation of mining leases.
- Promotes scientific and sustainable mining.
- Latest Reforms
- Greater private sector participation.
- Transparent e-auction system.
- Focus on critical and strategic minerals.

### Environmental Concerns

- The Karlapat region lies close to the Karlapat Wildlife Sanctuary, making environmental safeguards particularly important.

#### Potential concerns include:

- Deforestation.



- Wildlife habitat fragmentation.
- Soil erosion.
- Water resource impacts.
- Human–wildlife conflict.

### Mining projects in such areas require:

- Environmental Clearance (EC).
- Forest Clearance under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 (now subsumed under the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980, as amended).
- Wildlife-related approvals wherever applicable.

### About Karlapat Wildlife Sanctuary

|               |                                                             |
|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| • State       | Odisha                                                      |
| • District    | Kalahandi                                                   |
| • Established | 1992                                                        |
| • Area        | About 175 sq. km                                            |
| • River Basin | Tel River (tributary of the Mahanadi)                       |
| • Major Fauna | Asian Elephant, Leopard, Gaur, Sambar, Pangolin, Sloth Bear |
| • Major Flora | Sal, Bamboo, Mixed Deciduous Forest                         |

- Atomic Number: 13.
- Symbol: Al.
- Third most abundant element in the Earth's crust.
- Lightweight, corrosion-resistant, and highly recyclable.

### Odisha:

- Capital: Bhubaneswar.
- Governor: Hari Babu Kambhampati.
- Chief Minister: Mohan Charan Majhi.
- India's largest producer of bauxite and chromite.

### Exam Focus Points:

|                                                                            |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Mineral Block: Karlapat Bauxite Block.                                   |
| • Location: Kalahandi, Odisha.                                             |
| • Major Mineral: Bauxite.                                                  |
| • Largest Bauxite Producing State: Odisha.                                 |
| • Ore of Aluminium: Bauxite.                                               |
| • Major PSU: NALCO.                                                        |
| • Relevant Law: Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957. |
| • Nearby Protected Area: Karlapat Wildlife Sanctuary.                      |

### Additional Facts

- Aluminium

## Centre Reopens One-Time Option to Shift from NPS to Old Pension Scheme (OPS) for Eligible Employees



- The Government of India has reopened the one-time option for a select category of Central Government employees covered under the

National Pension System (NPS) to switch to the Old Pension Scheme (OPS).

- The option is available only to employees who satisfy the eligibility conditions laid down by the Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW).

### Why is it in News?

- The Centre has reopened the one-time option for eligible Central Government employees to opt for the Old Pension Scheme (OPS) instead of the National Pension System (NPS).

- The move follows judicial decisions and government notifications providing relief to employees recruited through vacancies advertised before the introduction of NPS.

### Key Highlights

- **Eligible Employees:** Central Government employees covered under NPS who satisfy prescribed conditions.
- **Eligibility Criterion:** Employees appointed against posts/vacancies advertised or notified before 22 December 2003, but who joined service on or after 1 January 2004.
- Such employees can exercise a one-time option to be covered under the Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, i.e., the Old Pension Scheme.
- The option is available only within the period notified by the Government.

### Who is Eligible?

#### A Central Government employee may opt for OPS if:

- The post was advertised or notified before 22 December 2003.
- Appointment was made on or after 1 January 2004.
- The employee is presently covered under the National Pension System (NPS).
- The employee fulfills the conditions specified by the Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW).

### About the Old Pension Scheme (OPS):

- The Old Pension Scheme (OPS) is a Defined Benefit Pension Scheme, under which the Government guarantees a fixed pension after retirement.

#### Features:

- Pension generally based on the last drawn basic pay and qualifying service under applicable pension rules.
- Government bears the pension liability.
- Periodic Dearness Relief (DR) is payable.

- Family pension provisions are available.
- No mandatory employee contribution towards the pension corpus.

### About the National Pension System (NPS):

|                                                                                             |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • The National Pension System (NPS) is a Defined Contribution Pension Scheme.               |
| • Introduced for: Central Government Employees<br>1 January 2004                            |
| • Regulator: Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)                      |
| • Nature: Market-linked Defined Contribution Scheme                                         |
| • Coverage: Government employees, private sector employees and all eligible Indian citizens |

#### Features:

- Employee and Government both contribute.
- Pension depends upon accumulated corpus and investment returns.
- Market-linked returns.
- Portable across jobs.
- Regulated by PFRDA.

### OPS vs NPS:

| Feature                                  | Old Pension Scheme (OPS) | National Pension System (NPS)        |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Nature                                   | Defined Benefit          | Defined Contribution                 |
| Pension                                  | Government-guaranteed    | Depends on corpus and market returns |
| Employee Contribution for pension corpus | Not required             | Required                             |
| Investment Risk                          | Government               | Subscriber                           |
| Pension Amount                           | Fixed                    | Variable as per rules                |

### Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA):

- Established: 2003 (Interim); Statutory status under the PFRDA Act, 2013



- |                                                                |
|----------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Ministry: Ministry of Finance                                |
| • Headquarters: New Delhi                                      |
| • Function: Regulates and develops the National Pension System |

### Functions:

- Regulates pension funds.
- Protects subscribers' interests.
- Promotes old-age income security.
- Oversees NPS intermediaries.

### Unified Pension Scheme (UPS):

- The Government has also introduced the Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) as an optional pension framework for Central Government employees covered under NPS.

### Features:

- Effective from 1 April 2025.
- Employees can choose between UPS and NPS, subject to eligibility.
- Seeks to provide greater certainty in post-retirement benefits while retaining a contributory structure.

### Constitutional Provisions:

- Article 309: Empowers Parliament and State Legislatures to regulate recruitment and conditions of service of public servants.
- Article 300A: Pension has been recognized through judicial interpretation as an important statutory right; it cannot be denied except by authority of law.

### Exam Focus Points:

- |                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Eligible employees: Posts advertised before 22 December 2003.           |
| • NPS implemented for Central Government employees: 1 January 2004.       |
| • Regulator of NPS: PFRDA.                                                |
| • PFRDA Act: 2013.                                                        |
| • Policy Department: Department of Pension & Pensioners' Welfare (DoPPW). |
| • Nature of OPS: Defined Benefit Scheme.                                  |
| • Nature of NPS: Defined Contribution Scheme.                             |
| • Related Pension Reform: Unified Pension Scheme (UPS).                   |

## IIT Kanpur to Establish Centre of Excellence for Green Hydrogen Research



- The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kanpur will establish a Centre of Excellence (CoE) on Green Hydrogen, named ECOGEN (Centre of Excellence on Innovative and Integrated Ecosystem for Green Hydrogen), under the Uttar Pradesh Green Hydrogen Policy, 2024.

- The project has been approved by the Uttar Pradesh Government and sanctioned by the Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Development Agency (UPNEDA).
- The Centre aims to promote cutting-edge research across the entire green hydrogen value chain, supporting India's clean energy transition and net-zero goals.

### What is Green Hydrogen?

- Green Hydrogen is hydrogen produced by electrolysis of water using electricity generated entirely from renewable energy sources such as solar, wind or hydropower.

### Electrolysis Process Water (H<sub>2</sub>O) is split into:

- Hydrogen (H<sub>2</sub>)
- Oxygen (O<sub>2</sub>)
- No carbon dioxide is emitted during production.

### Types of Hydrogen:

| Type                 | Production Method                                                | Carbon Emissions               |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Grey Hydrogen        | Natural gas/coal                                                 | without carbon capture<br>High |
| Blue Hydrogen        | Fossil fuels with Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage (CCUS) | Moderate                       |
| Green Hydrogen       | Electrolysis using renewable energy                              | Near Zero                      |
| Brown/Black Hydrogen | Coal gasification                                                | Very High                      |
| Pink Hydrogen        | Nuclear-powered electrolysis                                     | Very Low                       |

### Objectives of ECOGEN:

- Develop affordable green hydrogen technologies.
- Promote innovation across the hydrogen value chain.
- Support decarbonisation of industries.
- Build indigenous hydrogen technologies.
- Promote interdisciplinary research.
- Contribute towards Net Zero emissions.
- Strengthen India's clean energy ecosystem.

### National Green Hydrogen Mission:

|                                                                                               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Approved: January 2023                                                                      |
| • Nodal Ministry; Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE)                                 |
| • Initial Financial Outlay: ₹19,744 crore                                                     |
| • Objective: Make India a global hub for production, utilisation and export of Green Hydrogen |

### Mission Targets (by 2030):

- Green Hydrogen production capacity of at least 5 million metric tonnes (MMT) annually.
- Associated renewable energy capacity addition of about 125 GW.
- Reduction in fossil fuel imports.
- Lower greenhouse gas emissions.
- Creation of green jobs and investment opportunities.

### Green Hydrogen Value Chain:

|                                |
|--------------------------------|
| • Renewable Energy Generation. |
| • Water Electrolysis.          |
| • Hydrogen Storage.            |
| • Transportation.              |
| • Distribution.                |
| • Industrial Utilisation.      |
| • Export.                      |

### Major Applications of Green Hydrogen:

|                                                 |
|-------------------------------------------------|
| • Fertilizer production (Ammonia).              |
| • Petroleum refineries.                         |
| • Steel manufacturing.                          |
| • Heavy transport.                              |
| • Shipping.                                     |
| • Aviation (through Sustainable Aviation Fuel). |
| • Energy storage.                               |
| • Grid balancing.                               |
| • Chemical industries.                          |

### Uttar Pradesh New and Renewable Energy Development Agency (UPNEDA):

- Established: 1983
- Department : Department of Additional Sources of Energy
- Role: Promotion of renewable energy and energy efficiency

### Related Government Initiatives:

|                                    |
|------------------------------------|
| • National Green Hydrogen Mission. |
| • National Solar Mission.          |



- PM-KUSUM Scheme.
- National Bio-Energy Programme.
- FAME India Scheme.
- PM E-DRIVE Scheme.
- National Hydrogen Energy Roadmap.

### Electrolyser:

- An Electrolyser is a device that splits water into hydrogen and oxygen using electricity.

### Major Types

- Alkaline Electrolyser.
- PEM (Proton Exchange Membrane) Electrolyser.
- Solid Oxide Electrolyser.
- Net Zero Emissions: Net Zero means balancing greenhouse gas emissions released into the atmosphere with those removed through natural or technological means.

### India's Target:

- Achieve Net Zero by 2070.
- Announced during COP26 (Glasgow, 2021).

### India's Panchamrit Commitments (COP26):

## Mumbai to Get India's First AI-Powered Bird Sanctuary



- The Government of Maharashtra has approved the development of India's first AI-powered Bird Sanctuary at the Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary (TCFS) as part of a ₹45-crore Eco-Nature Park Project.

- Net Zero by 2070.
- 500 GW non-fossil electricity capacity by 2030.
- Meet 50% of energy requirements from renewables by 2030.
- Reduce emissions intensity of GDP by 45% by 2030.
- Reduce cumulative carbon emissions by one billion tonnes by 2030.

### Exam Focus Points:

- Centre of Excellence: ECOGEN.
- Institution: IIT Kanpur.
- State: Uttar Pradesh.
- Policy: Uttar Pradesh Green Hydrogen Policy, 2024.
- Nodal Agency: UPNEDA.
- Mission: National Green Hydrogen Mission.
- Nodal Ministry: MNRE.
- Target Production: 5 MMT Green Hydrogen by 2030.
- Renewable Capacity Target: 125 GW.
- Institute of National Importance: IIT Kanpur.

- The sanctuary will feature an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based Bird Detection and Monitoring Centre to improve bird conservation, biodiversity monitoring, and eco-tourism.

### What is an AI-Powered Bird Sanctuary?

- An AI-powered bird sanctuary integrates Artificial Intelligence, cameras, sensors, drones, and data analytics to monitor bird species and habitats.

### AI Applications:

- Automated bird identification.

- Bird counting.
- Species recognition.
- Migration tracking.
- Nest monitoring.
- Habitat assessment.
- Illegal activity detection.
- Real-time biodiversity database.

### Benefits of AI in Wildlife Conservation:

- Continuous monitoring.
- Higher accuracy than manual surveys.
- Early warning against habitat degradation.
- Improved conservation planning.
- Reduced human disturbance.
- Better policy decisions based on scientific data.

### About Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary (TCFS):

- State: Maharashtra
- District: Thane & Mumbai Metropolitan Region
- Declared Sanctuary: 2015
- Type: Marine & Wetland Sanctuary
- Area: Approximately 1,690 hectares
- Ramsar Site: Yes (part of Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary Ramsar Site)

### Importance of Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary:

- India's largest flamingo habitat in an urban area.
- Habitat for thousands of migratory birds.
- Supports marine biodiversity.
- Acts as an important carbon sink through mangroves.
- Serves as a breeding and feeding ground for several waterbirds.

### What are Migratory Birds?

- Migratory birds travel seasonally between breeding and wintering grounds in search of food and suitable climatic conditions.

- Major Flyway:
- India lies on the Central Asian Flyway (CAF), one of the world's major migratory bird routes.

### Central Asian Flyway (CAF):

- Covers 30 countries.
- Extends from the Arctic through Central Asia to the Indian Ocean.
- India is one of the most important wintering grounds.
- Supports over 280 migratory bird species.

### Ramsar Convention on Wetlands:

- Signed: 1971
- Place: Ramsar, Iran
- Came into Force: 1975
- Secretariat: Gland, Switzerland

### India and Ramsar Convention:

- India became a Contracting Party in 1982.
- India has 91 Ramsar Sites (as of 2026), the highest in Asia.

### IndiaAI Mission:

- Approved in 2024.
- Ministry: Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY).
- Promotes responsible AI development.
- Supports AI infrastructure, datasets, skilling, startups and research.

### Maharashtra

- Capital: Mumbai
- Governor: Jishnu Dev Varma
- Chief Minister: Devendra Fadnavis
- Largest Port: Mumbai Port
- Major Wetlands: Thane Creek, Nandur Madhmeshwar, Lonar Lake

### Flamingos



- Family: Phoenicopteridae.
- Feed mainly on algae, plankton and small crustaceans.
- Pink colour develops from carotenoid pigments in their diet.
- India is home to Greater Flamingo and Lesser Flamingo.

### Important Bird Sanctuaries in India:

| Bird Sanctuary               | State      | Significance                           |
|------------------------------|------------|----------------------------------------|
| Keoladeo National Park       | Rajasthan  | UNESCO World Heritage Site             |
| Ranganathittu Bird Sanctuary | Karnataka  | Riverine bird sanctuary                |
| Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary   | Gujarat    | Ramsar Site                            |
| Vedanthangal Bird Sanctuary  | Tamil Nadu | One of India's oldest bird sanctuaries |
| Sultanpur National Park      | Haryana    | Important wintering site               |
| Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary     | Kerala     | Vembanad Lake ecosystem                |

### Previous Conservation Technologies in India

- Camera Traps: Tiger estimation

- Drone Surveillance: Forest monitoring
- GPS Collars: Animal movement tracking
- AI Bird Monitoring: Bird identification & migration tracking
- Satellite Remote Sensing: Habitat mapping

### Exam Focus Points:

- Location: Thane Creek Flamingo Sanctuary (TCFS), Maharashtra.
- Project: India's first AI-powered Bird Sanctuary.
- Major Technology: Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based Bird Detection & Monitoring Centre.
- Project Cost: ₹45 crore.
- Flyway: Central Asian Flyway.
- International Convention: Ramsar Convention, 1971.
- Wildlife Law: Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- Wetland Rules: Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017.
- Related Mission: IndiaAI Mission.
- Habitat: Mangrove and coastal wetland ecosystem.

### Lets Revise

- ❖ Which Indian programme will be expanded for North Macedonia as announced by President Droupadi Murmu? **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC).**
- ❖ Which ministry launched the 'Gems of India' Challenge? **Ministry of Information & Broadcasting (MIB).**
- ❖ Which country became the first EU nation to ban social media access for children under 15? **France.**

- ❖ Who has been appointed as the new Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine? **Major General Mykhailo Drapatyi.**
- ❖ Which country recently imposed a 50% tariff on selected Canadian imports? **United States.**
- ❖ What does PARIVARTAN stand for in PARIVARTAN Scheme? **Programme for Accelerated Renewal and Incentivization of Vehicle Assets for Reducing Transport Air Pollution and Network Emissions.**
- ❖ Which category of vehicles is targeted under the PARIVARTAN Scheme? **Old commercial trucks and buses (BS-IV and older).**
- ❖ The Karlapat Bauxite Block is located in which state? **Odisha.**
- ❖ Which authority regulates the National Pension System (NPS)? **Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).**
- ❖ From which date was NPS made applicable to new Central Government recruits (except Armed Forces)? **1 January 2004.**
- ❖ Which IIT is establishing the ECOGEN Centre of Excellence for Green Hydrogen? **IIT Kanpur.**
- ❖ Which state is establishing India's first AI-powered Bird Sanctuary? **Maharashtra.**





# *The* **ACHIEVERS** IAS ACADEMY PATNA

## *Daily* **NEWS CHRONICLE**

### IMPORTANCE OF CURRENT AFFAIRS IN UPSC EXAMINATIONS

Current Affairs hold a crucial place in the preparation for the UPSC Civil Services Examination. A comprehensive understanding of recent national and international developments helps aspirants strengthen their General Studies foundation and develop a well-rounded perspective on important issues. Topics such as government policies, schemes, economy, international relations, science and technology, environment, defence, social justice, governance, reports, indices, appointments, awards, and major global events are highly relevant for both the Prelims and Mains examinations. Regular study of current affairs not only enhances factual knowledge but also improves analytical ability, critical thinking, answer-writing skills, and decision-making aptitude. Since UPSC questions often connect contemporary developments with static subjects, consistent preparation of current affairs enables aspirants to understand issues in depth and present balanced, informed, and relevant answers. It also plays an important role in Essay writing, Ethics, and the Personality Test, giving candidates a strong edge throughout the examination process.

### CONTACT US



+91 8434931877



achievers\_ias\_patna



PATLIPUTRA GOLAMBAR



ACHIEVERS IAS ACADEMY (UPSC/BPSC)



achieversiaspatna@gmail.com



Achievers IAS Academy



www.achieversiaspatna.co.in



Achievers IAS Academy, PATNA