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Top Stories of The Day

- Indian Army Launches *Indigenous XWG Diesel* to Enhance Military Mobility in Extreme Weather Conditions
- Lok Sabha Passes Registration of *Births and Deaths Amendment Bill 2026* to Strengthen Civil Records
- PM Modi Inaugurates *Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport* to Boost Andhra Pradesh Connectivity
- Cabinet Approves *PM Surya Sarovar Yojana* to Expand Floating Solar Energy Capacity Across India
- Union Cabinet Extends *PM-KISAN Scheme* Till 2030–31 to Support Farmer Income Nationwide
- India Wins Silver and Bronze Medals at *U17 World Wrestling Championships* in Baku
- Foreign Secretary *Vikram Misri* Concludes Bhutan Visit, Strengthening India-Bhutan Strategic Partnership
- *Gujarat's Pithora Painting* Receives GI Tag, Promoting Tribal Culture and Artisan Livelihoods
- Former Army Chief General *Vishwa Nath Sharma* Passes Away, Remembered for Military Service
- Cabinet Approves *Samudra Manthan Scheme* to Boost Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration

Indian Army Launches Indigenous Xtreme Weather Grade (XWG) Diesel for Combat and Logistics Vehicles



- The Chief of the Army Staff (COAS), General Dhiraj Seth, has launched the indigenously developed Xtreme Weather Grade (XWG) Diesel to enhance the mobility, reliability, and operational readiness of the Indian Army's combat and logistics vehicles in extreme climatic conditions.
- The specialised diesel has been designed for deployment in high-altitude and sub-zero temperature regions, including Eastern Ladakh, the Line of Actual Control (LAC), and the Line of Control (LoC), where conventional diesel often loses fluidity.
- The initiative strengthens India's defence logistics and supports the vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat in defence technology.

What is Xtreme Weather Grade (XWG) Diesel?

- Xtreme Weather Grade (XWG) Diesel is a specially formulated indigenous military-grade diesel fuel designed to remain operational in very low temperatures.
- Unlike conventional diesel, it retains its flow characteristics in freezing conditions, ensuring uninterrupted functioning of military vehicles in snow-bound and mountainous terrain.

The fuel enhances:

- Vehicle mobility in sub-zero temperatures.
- Engine reliability and performance.
- Operational readiness of combat formations.
- Safety during military logistics operations.
- Fuel efficiency in harsh climatic conditions.

Importance for India's Defence:

- The introduction of XWG Diesel will significantly strengthen India's military logistics by ensuring uninterrupted movement of troops, tanks, armoured vehicles, and supply convoys in strategically sensitive border regions.

It is particularly important for:

- High-altitude warfare.
- Border infrastructure support.
- Rapid troop mobilisation.
- Sustained military operations during winter.
- Enhanced combat preparedness along India's northern borders.

Challenges of High-Altitude Operations:

Military operations in high-altitude regions face several challenges, including:

- Extremely low temperatures.
- Reduced oxygen levels.
- Heavy snowfall.
- Fuel thickening or gelling.
- Difficult terrain and logistics.
- Specialised fuels like XWG Diesel help overcome these operational constraints.

Related Defence Initiative: Aatmanirbhar Bharat:

- The development of XWG Diesel aligns with the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative, which promotes:
- Indigenous defence technologies.
- Reduced dependence on imported military equipment.
- Strengthening India's defence manufacturing ecosystem.

- Self-reliance in strategic technologies.

Related Fuel Technology:

- India has previously introduced Winter Grade Diesel for cold regions such as Ladakh, with a very low pour point to ensure smooth engine operation during severe winters. XWG Diesel represents a further advancement tailored to military operational requirements in extreme climatic conditions.

Exam Focus Points:

- Initiative: Xtreme Weather Grade (XWG) Diesel.

- Launched By: General Dhiraj Seth, Chief of the Army Staff.
- Purpose: Improve performance of combat and logistics vehicles in extreme weather.
- Deployment Areas: Eastern Ladakh, LAC, LoC.
- Related Initiative: Aatmanirbhar Bharat.
- Strategic Importance: High-altitude military logistics and combat readiness.
- Related Institution: High Altitude Warfare School (HAWS), Gulmarg.
- Earlier Fuel Initiative: Winter Grade Diesel for Ladakh.

Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2026 Passed in Lok Sabha



better public service delivery, and support evidence-based policymaking through reliable population statistics.

Major Provisions of the Bill:

- The Lok Sabha passed the Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2026 during the Monsoon Session of Parliament amid continued Opposition protests over the alleged police crackdown on students.
- The Bill seeks to strengthen the provisions relating to delayed registration of births and deaths under the Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969, with the objective of ensuring timely registration, improving the accuracy of civil registration records, and enhancing the reliability of India's vital statistics system.

- The amendment makes the process for delayed registration more stringent by introducing stricter procedures and verification requirements. The objective is to encourage citizens to register births and deaths promptly, thereby reducing fraudulent or inaccurate entries and strengthening the integrity of official records. The amendment does not alter the mandatory nature of birth and death registration but focuses on improving compliance with existing timelines.

Objectives of the Amendment:

- The Bill aims to strengthen India's Civil Registration System (CRS) by ensuring that births and deaths are registered within the prescribed time limits. It seeks to discourage unnecessary delays in registration, improve the accuracy of demographic records, facilitate

Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969:

- The Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969 provides the legal framework for the compulsory registration of births and deaths across India.

Key Features:

- Makes registration of births and deaths mandatory.
- Establishes a uniform civil registration system throughout the country.

- Provides for the appointment of Registrars.
- Prescribes procedures for registration and issuance of certificates.
- Enables compilation of national vital statistics.

Civil Registration System (CRS):

- The Civil Registration System (CRS) is India's official mechanism for recording vital events such as births and deaths.

Importance:

- Provides legal identity from birth.
- Supports issuance of birth and death certificates.
- Generates reliable demographic statistics.
- Assists in planning health, education, and welfare programmes.
- Facilitates implementation of population policies.

- Infant Mortality Rate (IMR).
- Fertility Rate.
- Other vital demographic indicators.

- It is conducted by the Office of the Registrar General of India.

Constitutional and Legal Significance:

- Although the Constitution does not specifically mention birth registration, it is linked with several constitutional principles:
- Article 21 – Right to Life and Personal Liberty (legal identity and access to services).
- Directive Principles of State Policy promoting public health and welfare.
- Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 16.9 – Providing legal identity for all, including birth registration.

Office of the Registrar General of India (RGI):

- The Registrar General of India (RGI) is responsible for administering the Civil Registration System in India.
- Organisation: Office of the Registrar General of India (RGI)
- Administrative: Ministry of Home Affairs
- Functions: Civil Registration System, Census, Sample Registration System (SRS)

Sample Registration System (SRS):

- The Sample Registration System (SRS) is India's largest demographic survey for estimating:
- Birth Rate.
- Death Rate.

Exam Focus Points:

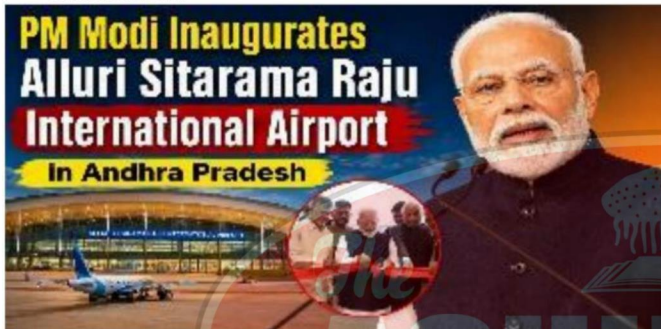
- Bill: Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2026.
- Parent Act: Registration of Births and Deaths Act, 1969.
- Objective: Strengthen provisions for delayed registration.
- Related System: Civil Registration System (CRS).
- Implementing Authority: Registrar General of India (RGI).
- Administrative Ministry: Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Related Survey: Sample Registration System (SRS).
- Related SDG: SDG 16.9 – Legal identity for all.

Prime Minister Modi Inaugurates Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport in Andhra Pradesh

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated the Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport at

Bhogapuram in Vizianagaram district, Andhra Pradesh.

- Developed as a greenfield international airport, the project is expected to transform North Coastal Andhra Pradesh into a major hub for aviation, tourism, trade, logistics, and industrial development.
- Built at an estimated cost of about ₹5,600 crore, the airport is designed to significantly improve domestic and international connectivity while supporting the UDAN and PM Gati Shakti initiatives.



Key Features:

- 3,800-metre Code 4E runway capable of handling wide-body aircraft such as the Boeing 777 and Airbus A350.
- Integrated domestic and international passenger terminal.
- Dedicated cargo terminal to promote exports.
- Terminal architecture inspired by the Flying Fish, reflecting the maritime heritage of the Bay of Bengal.

Greenfield Airport:

- A Greenfield Airport is an airport constructed on previously undeveloped land rather than by expanding an existing airport.

Advantages

- | |
|---|
| • Modern infrastructure and technology. |
| • Better passenger and cargo handling. |
| • Scope for future expansion. |
| • Improved operational efficiency. |
| • Supports regional economic development. |

About the UDAN Scheme:

- UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) is the Government of India's regional connectivity scheme launched under the National Civil Aviation Policy, 2016.

Objectives

- Improve air connectivity to underserved and unserved regions.
- Make air travel affordable.
- Promote balanced regional development.
- Enhance tourism and economic growth.

About Alluri Sitarama Raju:

- Alluri Sitarama Raju (1897–1924) was a prominent freedom fighter who led the Rampa Rebellion (Manyam Rebellion) against British rule.

Key Facts:

- | |
|---|
| • Active in the tribal regions of present-day Andhra Pradesh. |
| • Led tribal communities against oppressive colonial forest laws. |
| • Conducted guerrilla warfare against the British. |
| • Martyred in 1924 after being captured by British forces. |

- He is popularly known as "Manyam Veerudu" (Hero of the Forests).

About the Airports Authority of India (AAI):

- | |
|---------------------------|
| • Established: 1995 |
| • Headquarters: New Delhi |
| • Chairman: Vipin Kumar |

Andhra Pradesh:

- | |
|--|
| • Capital: Amaravati |
| • Governor: Syed Abdul Nazeer |
| • Chief Minister: N. Chandrababu Naidu |
| • Largest City: Visakhapatnam |
| • Major Port Visakhapatnam Port |

- Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE):**

- Solar Energy.
- Wind Energy.
- Small Hydro Power.
- Bioenergy.
- Green Hydrogen.

India's Renewable Energy Targets:

- India has set ambitious renewable energy goals under its climate commitments.
- Key Targets:
- 500 GW of non-fossil fuel electricity capacity by 2030.
- About 50% of installed electric power capacity from non-fossil fuel sources by 2030.
- Net Zero emissions by 2070.
- Reduction in emissions intensity of GDP under the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Related Government Initiatives:

- PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana
- Launched in 2024.
- Promotes rooftop solar systems for households.
- Provides financial assistance for residential rooftop solar installations.
- Aims to reduce household electricity bills and increase distributed solar generation.

PM-KUSUM Scheme:

- Launched in 2019
- Promotes installation of solar pumps.
- Solarisation of existing agricultural pumps.
- Decentralised renewable energy generation for farmers.

National Solar Mission:

- Launched in 2010.
- One of the eight missions under the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC).
- Focuses on large-scale deployment of solar energy technologies.

International Solar Alliance (ISA):

- Launched: 2015
- Director General: Dr. Ashish Khanna
- Founding Countries: India and France
- Headquarters: Gurugram, Haryana

National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC):

- Launched in 2008, it consists of eight national missions, including:
- National Solar Mission.
- National Water Mission.
- National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency.
- National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture.

Floating Solar Potential in India:

- India possesses significant floating solar potential because of its vast network of:
- Reservoirs.
- Dams.
- Irrigation canals.
- Lakes.
- Industrial water bodies.
- Floating solar can complement hydropower projects by utilising the same reservoir infrastructure.

Exam Focus Points:

- Scheme: Pradhan Mantri Surya Sarovar Yojana (PM-SSY).
- Outlay: ₹5,070 crore.
- Target: 5,000 MW Floating Solar PV capacity.
- Implementation Period: FY 2026–27 to FY 2030–31.
- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.

Technology: Floating Solar Photovoltaic (FSPV).	International Initiative: International Solar Alliance.
Related Scheme: PM Surya Ghar: Muft Bijli Yojana.	Climate Goal: Net Zero emissions by 2070.
Related Mission: National Solar Mission.	

Union Cabinet Approves Extension of PM-KISAN Scheme Till 2030–31



Objectives of the Scheme

The PM-KISAN Scheme aims to:

- Provide assured income support to landholding farmers.
- Improve farmers' liquidity for agricultural operations.
- Reduce dependence on informal credit sources.
- Promote financial inclusion through DBT.
- Enhance rural incomes and agricultural productivity.

Eligibility Criteria

- The scheme covers eligible landholding farmer families, defined as husband, wife, and minor children owning cultivable land.

Excluded Categories

The following are not eligible:

• Institutional landholders.
• Present and former constitutional post holders.
• Serving or retired officers and employees of Central/State Government (except certain categories).
• Income tax payers.
• Professionals such as doctors, engineers, lawyers, chartered accountants, and architects engaged in practice.

About PM-KISAN Scheme:

- The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) is a Central Sector Scheme launched on 24 February 2019 to provide assured income support to eligible landholding farmer families across India.
- Under the scheme, each eligible farmer family receives ₹6,000 per year, paid in three equal instalments of ₹2,000 directly into Aadhaar-linked bank accounts through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mechanism. The objective is to supplement farmers' financial needs for purchasing agricultural inputs and meeting household expenses.

Digital Initiatives under PM-KISAN:

To improve transparency and service delivery, the Government has introduced:

- e-KYC for beneficiary authentication.

- PM-KISAN Mobile App.
- Kisan e-Mitra, an AI-powered chatbot providing scheme-related information in multiple Indian languages.
- Aadhaar-based payment system.
- Online beneficiary status tracking.

- Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT): Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) is a mechanism through which government subsidies and welfare benefits are transferred directly into beneficiaries' bank accounts. Launched in 2013.

Exam Focus Points:

Related Agricultural Schemes:

- PM Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY): Provides crop insurance against natural calamities, pests, and diseases. Launched in 2016.
- Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY): Promotes irrigation efficiency under the slogan "Har Khet Ko Pani" and "Per Drop More Crop." Launched in 2015.
- Kisan Credit Card (KCC): Provides institutional credit to farmers at concessional interest rates. Launched in 1998.
- Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF): Supports post-harvest infrastructure and community farming assets through medium- and long-term financing. Launched in 2020.

- Scheme: PM-KISAN.
- Launched: 24 February 2019.
- Type: Central Sector Scheme.
- Extension: Till FY 2030–31.
- Financial Outlay: ₹3.15 lakh crore.
- Annual Assistance: ₹6,000 per eligible farmer family.
- Transfer Mode: Aadhaar-enabled Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).
- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
- Digital Initiative: Kisan e-Mitra AI Chatbot.
- Objective: Income support for landholding farmer families.

India Wins One Silver and Two Bronze Medals at U17 World Wrestling Championships 2026



- India delivered an impressive performance at the United World Wrestling (UWW) U17 World Wrestling Championships 2026 held in Baku, Azerbaijan, winning one silver and two bronze medals in the Greco-Roman category.
- Anuj won the silver medal in the 65 kg category, while Aditya Gupta (55 kg) and Hardeep (110 kg) secured bronze medals, highlighting India's

growing strength in age-group wrestling on the global stage.

India's Performance:

- India continued its strong tradition in age-group wrestling by winning three medals in the Greco-Roman competition.
- | Wrestler | Category | Medal |
|--------------|----------|--------|
| Anuj | 65 kg | Silver |
| Aditya Gupta | 55 kg | Bronze |
| Hardeep | 110 kg | Bronze |

About the U17 World Wrestling Championships:

- The U17 World Wrestling Championships is an annual international wrestling competition organised by United World Wrestling (UWW) for athletes below 17 years of age.

Competition Categories

- Men's Freestyle.
- Women's Wrestling.
- Greco-Roman Wrestling.

What is Greco-Roman Wrestling?

- Greco-Roman Wrestling is one of the two Olympic wrestling disciplines.

Key Features:

- Wrestlers are allowed to attack only above the waist.
- Holds below the waist and leg attacks are prohibited.
- Greater emphasis on throws, lifts, and upper-body techniques.
- Included in the modern Olympic Games since 1896.

Difference Between Freestyle and Greco-Roman Wrestling

Feature	Freestyle	Greco-Roman
Leg Attacks	Allowed	Not Allowed
Holds Below Waist	Prohibited	Allowed
Olympic Status	Yes	Yes
Main Focus	Whole-body	Upper-body throws and clinches

About United World Wrestling (UWW):

- Headquarters: Corsier-sur-Vevey, Switzerland
- Established: 1912 (as FILA); renamed UWW in 2014
- President: Nenad Lalović

Wrestling Federation of India (WFI):

- Founded: 1967
- Headquarters: New Delhi
- President: Sanjay Singh
- Secretary: V.N. Prasood

Exam Focus Points:

- Event: U17 World Wrestling Championships 2026.
- Venue: Baku, Azerbaijan.
- Governing Body: United World Wrestling (UWW).
- India's Performance: 1 Silver and 2 Bronze medals.
- Silver Medal: Anuj (65 kg).
- Bronze Medals: Aditya Gupta (55 kg) and Hardeep (110 kg).
- Discipline: Greco-Roman Wrestling.
- UWW Headquarters: Corsier-sur-Vevey, Switzerland.
- National Governing Body: Wrestling Federation of India (WFI).

Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri Concludes Two-Day Official Visit to Bhutan



- Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri concluded his two-day official visit to Bhutan, reaffirming the close and unique partnership between India and Bhutan under India's Neighbourhood First Policy.
- During the visit, he held meetings with Bhutan's top leadership, including King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, Prime Minister Tshering

Tobgay, Foreign Minister D.N. Dhungyel, and Foreign Secretary Dasho Pema Lektup Dorji.

- He also co-chaired the 5th India–Bhutan Development Cooperation Talks, where both sides reviewed the progress of India-assisted projects under Bhutan's 13th Five-Year Plan and discussed expanding cooperation in infrastructure, health, education, connectivity, energy, and capacity building. India also signed a ₹4,000 crore concessional Line of Credit (LoC) to support Bhutan's development priorities.

Major Outcomes of the Visit:

- The visit focused on strengthening the long-standing India–Bhutan partnership through enhanced development cooperation. Both countries reviewed the implementation of India's assistance under Bhutan's 13th Five-Year Plan and discussed accelerating projects in infrastructure, connectivity, health, education, digital technology, renewable energy, skill development, and human resource capacity building.
- India also extended a ₹4,000 crore concessional Line of Credit, reaffirming its commitment to Bhutan's socio-economic development. The two sides further agreed to deepen cooperation in the healthcare sector and maintain regular high-level political exchanges.

India–Bhutan Development Cooperation:

- India is Bhutan's largest development partner and has consistently supported the country's Five-Year Plans through Project Tied Assistance (PTA), High Impact Community Development Projects (HICDPs), grants, and concessional loans.
- The Development Cooperation Talks, commonly known as Plan Talks, are the principal institutional mechanism for reviewing bilateral development projects and identifying future areas of cooperation.

India's Neighbourhood First Policy:

- The Neighbourhood First Policy places priority on strengthening political, economic, connectivity, security, and people-to-people relations with India's neighbouring countries.

Objectives:

- | |
|--|
| • Promote regional peace and stability. |
| • Enhance economic integration. |
| • Improve cross-border connectivity. |
| • Strengthen energy cooperation. |
| • Expand trade and investment. |
| • Deepen cultural and educational exchanges. |

- Bhutan remains one of the most important partners under this policy.

India–Bhutan Relations:

- India and Bhutan share special diplomatic relations based on mutual trust, friendship, and strategic cooperation.

Major Areas of Cooperation:

- | |
|-------------------------------|
| • Hydropower. |
| • Trade and commerce. |
| • Education. |
| • Healthcare. |
| • Digital connectivity. |
| • Infrastructure development. |
| • Space cooperation. |
| • Capacity building. |
| • Border management. |

- India is Bhutan's largest trading partner and the principal destination for Bhutan's exports.

India–Bhutan Friendship Treaty:

- The India–Bhutan Treaty of Friendship was originally signed in 1949 and revised in 2007.

Key Features of the 2007 Treaty:

- Recognises Bhutan as a fully sovereign nation.
- Promotes mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity.

- Strengthens cooperation in defence, security, trade, and economic development.
- Provides for close consultation on issues of mutual interest.

Bhutan:

- Capital: Thimphu
- Currency: Ngultrum (BTN)
- King: Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck
- Prime Minister: Tshering Tobgay

Hydropower Cooperation:

- Hydropower is the cornerstone of India–Bhutan economic relations.

Major Hydropower Projects:

- Chukha Hydroelectric Project.
- Tala Hydroelectric Project.
- Mangdechhu Hydroelectric Project.
- Punatsangchhu-I Hydroelectric Project.
- Punatsangchhu-II Hydroelectric Project.

- Bhutan exports surplus hydroelectricity to India, making hydropower a major source of revenue for Bhutan.

BIMSTEC:

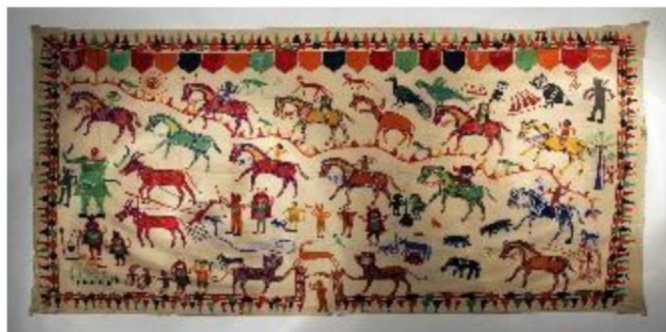
- Both India and Bhutan are members of the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC).

- Established: 1997
- Headquarters: Dhaka, Bangladesh
- Members: Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand

Exam Focus Points:

- Foreign Secretary: Vikram Misri.
- Country Visited: Bhutan.
- Major Meeting: 5th India–Bhutan Development Cooperation Talks.
- Development Plan Reviewed: Bhutan's 13th Five-Year Plan.
- Financial Assistance: ₹4,000 crore concessional Line of Credit.
- Foreign Policy: Neighbourhood First Policy.
- Friendship Treaty: 1949 (revised in 2007).
- Major Cooperation Area: Hydropower.
- Regional Groupings: BIMSTEC and BBIN.

Gujarat's Pithora Painting Receives Geographical Indication (GI) Tag, Boosting Tribal Art and Livelihoods



- Pithora Painting, the traditional ritualistic folk art of Gujarat, has received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag, providing a major boost to the preservation of tribal cultural heritage and the livelihoods of indigenous artisans. Practised

primarily by the Rathwa, Bhil, and Bhilala tribal communities in Chhota Udepur, Vadodara, and Panchmahal districts, Pithora painting is not merely an art form but a sacred ritual dedicated to Baba Pithora, the chief deity of the Rathwa tribe.

- The GI recognition is expected to enhance market access, protect the authenticity of the art, prevent imitation, and improve the socio-economic conditions of tribal artists.

About Pithora Painting:

- Pithora Painting is a ritualistic tribal folk art traditionally painted on the interior walls of homes as an offering to Baba Pithora, seeking prosperity, good health, rainfall, and peace. Over time, the art has evolved from mud walls to canvas, paper, and home décor products, enabling tribal artisans to reach national and international markets while preserving its cultural significance.

Features of Pithora Painting:

- Pithora paintings are characterised by vibrant colours and symbolic representations of tribal life and spirituality.

Major Features:

- Painted using natural and mineral-based colours.
- Rich depiction of horses, gods, ancestors, birds, animals, trees, and nature.
- Closely associated with rituals and religious ceremonies.
- Traditionally created by Lakhara (tribal painters).
- Every painting is unique, reflecting the artist's style while preserving traditional symbolism.

Significance of the GI Tag:

- The GI tag provides legal protection and economic opportunities by:
 - Protecting the authenticity of Pithora Painting.
 - Preventing unauthorised imitation and misuse.
 - Promoting tribal handicrafts in domestic and international markets.
 - Increasing artisans' incomes and employment.
 - Preserving India's tribal cultural heritage.
 - Supporting the Vocal for Local and Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiatives.

Support for Tribal Artisans:

- The Gujarat State Handloom and Handicrafts Development Corporation (GSHHDC), through

its Garvi Gurjari brand, has been promoting Pithora Painting by:

- Purchasing artworks directly from artisans.
- Organising design development workshops.
- Providing transport and stall subsidies.
- Facilitating participation in exhibitions and live demonstrations.
- Promoting digital marketing of tribal handicrafts.

What is a Geographical Indication (GI)?

- A Geographical Indication (GI) is an intellectual property right granted to products that possess qualities, reputation, or characteristics essentially attributable to their geographical origin.

Legal Framework:

- Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.
- Came into force in 2003.
- Administered by the GI Registry, Chennai under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).

Benefits of GI Tag:

- Legal protection against misuse.
- Enhances product value and marketability.
- Preserves traditional knowledge and craftsmanship.
- Promotes exports.
- Encourages rural and tribal entrepreneurship.
- Supports sustainable livelihoods.

Other GI-Tagged Products of Gujarat:

- | Product | Category |
|------------------|----------------------|
| Patan Patola | Handloom Textile |
| Kutch Embroidery | Handicraft |
| Agates of Cambay | Stone Craft |
| Gir Kesar Mango | Agricultural Product |
| Bhalia Wheat | Agricultural Product |
| Surat Zari Craft | Handicraft |

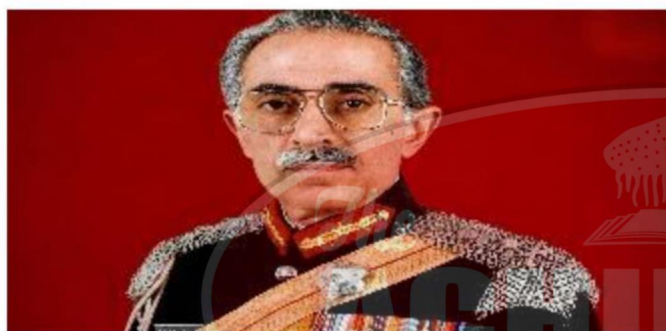
- Tangaliya Shawl Handloom

Exam Focus Points:

- GI Product: Pithora Painting.
- State: Gujarat.
- GI Tag Granted: 2021.
- Tribes: Rathwa, Bhil, Bhilala.
- Major Districts: Chhota Udepur, Vadodara, Panchmahal.

- Chief Deity: Baba Pithora.
- Supporting Organisation: GSHHDC (Garvi Gurjari).
- Related Organisation: TRIFED.
- GI Law: Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.
- GI Registry: Chennai.

Former Army Chief General Vishwa Nath Sharma Passes Away at 96



- Former Chief of the Army Staff (COAS), General Vishwa Nath Sharma (PVSM, AVSM, ADC), passed away at the age of 96 in New Delhi.
- A distinguished 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak War veteran, he served as the 14th Chief of the Army Staff from 1 May 1988 to 30 June 1990.
- General Sharma was the first officer commissioned after India's Independence to rise to the position of Army Chief.
- During his tenure, he played a crucial role in strengthening India's defence preparedness, particularly during the 1987 Sumdorong Chu (Wangdung) standoff with China, and oversaw key military operations, including the deployment of the Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF) in Sri Lanka.

Awards and Honours:

- General Vishwa Nath Sharma received several distinguished military honours, including:
- Param Vishisht Seva Medal (PVSM) – Distinguished service of the highest order.
- Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (AVSM) – Distinguished service of an exceptional order.
- Aide-de-Camp (ADC) to the President of India.

Exam Focus Points:

- Former Army Chief: General Vishwa Nath Sharma.
- Tenure: 1988–1990.
- Major Wars: 1965 and 1971 Indo-Pak Wars.
- Major Event: Sumdorong Chu (Wangdung) Standoff.
- Military Operation: Indian Peace Keeping Force (IPKF).
- Awards: PVSM, AVSM.

Union Cabinet Approves ₹84,084 Crore Samudra Manthan Scheme for Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Samudra Manthan – National Offshore Exploration Scheme (NOES) with a total outlay of ₹84,084

crore to accelerate offshore oil and natural gas exploration in India's deepwater and ultra-deepwater regions. The scheme aims to reduce India's dependence on imported crude oil and

natural gas, enhance energy security, attract global investments, and strengthen domestic hydrocarbon production through advanced seismic surveys, exploratory drilling, and development of common offshore infrastructure. The scheme will be implemented over the next five years under the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG).



The scheme includes:

- Large-scale 2D and 3D seismic surveys.
- Exploratory drilling in deepwater and ultra-deepwater basins.
- Development of common offshore exploration infrastructure.
- Financial support to reduce exploration risks.
- Promotion of advanced exploration technologies.
- Increased participation of domestic and global energy companies.

Significance of the Scheme

The scheme is expected to:

- Reduce India's dependence on imported crude oil and natural gas.
- Strengthen long-term energy security.
- Improve domestic hydrocarbon production.
- Attract foreign direct investment (FDI) in the exploration sector.
- Create employment in the petroleum and offshore industries.
- Support India's growing energy demand while ensuring strategic resilience.

What is Offshore Exploration?

- Offshore exploration refers to the search for petroleum and natural gas beneath the seabed in oceans and offshore basins.

Types:

• Shallow Water Exploration – Generally up to about 400 metres water depth.
• Deepwater Exploration – Around 400–1,500 metres water depth.
• Ultra-Deepwater Exploration – Beyond 1,500 metres water depth.

- Deepwater exploration requires sophisticated drilling technology, high investment, and advanced geological surveys.

Why is Deepwater Exploration Important?

- India imports a large share of its crude oil and natural gas requirements, making it vulnerable to global price fluctuations and geopolitical disruptions.

Deepwater exploration helps:

• Increase domestic oil and gas reserves.
• Diversify energy sources.
• Reduce the import bill.
• Improve strategic energy resilience.
• Support industrial and economic growth.

National Deep Water Exploration Mission:

- The Samudra Manthan Scheme forms part of India's broader National Deep Water Exploration Mission, announced to accelerate exploration of offshore hydrocarbon resources and strengthen long-term energy security.

Hydrocarbon Exploration in India:

• Major Offshore Basins
• Mumbai Offshore Basin.
• Krishna–Godavari (KG) Basin.
• Mahanadi Basin.

- Cauvery Basin.
- Andaman Offshore Basin.

- The Mahanadi Offshore Basin recently witnessed the spudding of a deepwater exploratory well under the Samudra Manthan initiative.

Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH):

- Established: 1993
- Headquarters: Noida, Uttar Pradesh
- Administrative Ministry: Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas

Functions:

- Regulates upstream oil and gas exploration.
- Provides technical advice to the Government.
- Monitors exploration and production activities.
- Promotes hydrocarbon exploration.

Open Acreage Licensing Programme (OALP):

- The Open Acreage Licensing Programme (OALP) allows companies to identify and propose exploration blocks throughout the year.
- Implemented Under:
- Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP).

Objectives:

- Increase private sector participation.
- Simplify exploration licensing.
- Enhance domestic hydrocarbon production.

About ONGC:

- Full Name : Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited
- Established: 1956
- Headquarters: New Delhi
- Chairman & CEO: Arun Kumar Singh
- ONGC is India's largest crude oil and natural gas exploration and production company.

Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP):

- Launched in 2016.
- Replaced the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP).

Introduced:

- Open Acreage Licensing.
- Revenue-sharing model.
- Uniform licensing for all hydrocarbons.
- Marketing and pricing freedom for producers.

Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR)

India has established strategic crude oil reserves at:

- Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh).
- Mangaluru (Karnataka).
- Padur (Karnataka).

Exam Focus Points:

- Scheme: Samudra Manthan – National Offshore Exploration Scheme.
- Outlay: ₹84,084 crore.
- Nodal Ministry: Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.
- Objective: Promote deepwater and ultra-deepwater oil and gas exploration.
- Implementation Period: Five years.
- Related Mission: National Deep Water Exploration Mission.
- Regulator: Directorate General of Hydrocarbons (DGH).
- Licensing Policy: Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP).
- Major PSU: ONGC.
- Strategic Goal: Energy security and reduction in oil imports.

Lets Revise

- ❖ What is the name of the indigenous fuel recently launched by the Indian Army for extreme climatic conditions? **Xtreme Weather Grade (XWG) Diesel.**
- ❖ Which Bill was recently passed by the Lok Sabha to strengthen provisions for delayed registration of births and deaths? **Registration of Births and Deaths (Amendment) Bill, 2026.**
- ❖ Which new international airport was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Andhra Pradesh? **Alluri Sitarama Raju International Airport.**
- ❖ Which new scheme has been approved to promote floating solar power projects in India? **Pradhan Mantri Surya Sarovar Yojana (PM-SSY).**
- ❖ Which scheme has been extended till FY 2030–31 by the Union Cabinet? **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN).**
- ❖ Who won India's silver medal at the U17 World Wrestling Championships 2026? **Anuj (65 kg).**
- ❖ Which Indian official recently concluded a two-day official visit to Bhutan? **Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri.**
- ❖ Which traditional tribal art form of Gujarat has received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag? **Pithora Painting.**
- ❖ Which former Chief of the Army Staff recently passed away at the age of 96? **General Vishwa Nath Sharma.**
- ❖ Which new scheme has been approved to promote offshore oil and gas exploration in India? **Samudra Manthan – National Offshore Exploration Scheme (NOES).**



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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.

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