



# INSTA ವಿದ್ಯಮಾನ

**A Weekly Current Affairs Initiative**

**KAS, FDA/SDA/PDO/ GROUP C,  
PSI/PC, TEACHER'S EXAMS**

**ಕನ್ನಡ & English**

**By- Nandan Sir**

**May 3<sup>rd</sup> Week 2026**

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**INSTA ವಿದ್ಯಮಾನ**  
**WEEKLY CURRENT AFFAIRS**  
**MAY 3<sup>RD</sup> Week 2026**

**Ecocide**

**Syllabus: GS3/ Environment**

**Context**

- The term “**ecocide**” has gained renewed attention amid allegations of large-scale environmental destruction during recent conflicts, including the wars in Gaza, Lebanon, and Iran.

**Ecocide**

- Ecocide refers to severe, widespread, or long-term destruction of the environment caused by human actions.
- The term was coined in 1970 by Arthur W. Galston.
- Note - Vietnam became the first country to criminalise ecocide domestically in 1990.

**Connect with the basics - International Laws on Environment**

**Climate Change & Ozone**

- **UNFCCC (1992)**: The foundational framework aiming to stabilize greenhouse gas emissions.
- **Kyoto Protocol (1997)**: Set legally binding emission reduction targets for developed countries and established flexible market mechanisms (CDM, Emissions Trading).
- **Paris Agreement (2015)**: A legally binding treaty adopted at COP21 aiming to limit global warming to well below 2°C (striving for 1.5°C) using Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).
- **Montreal Protocol (1987)**: A highly successful, legally binding treaty phased out ozone-depleting substances (ODSs). [Recent] Its Kigali Amendment (2016) mandates the phased reduction of hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs).

**Biodiversity & Wildlife**

- **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**: Targets the conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components, and fair sharing of benefits. Includes the Cartagena Protocol (biosafety) and the Nagoya Protocol (access and benefit-sharing).
- **CITES (1973)**: Controls international trade of endangered flora and fauna to ensure survival.
- **Ramsar Convention (1971)**: Focuses on the conservation and wise use of internationally significant wetlands.

**Hazardous Wastes & Chemicals**

- **Basel Convention (1989)**: Controls the transboundary movement of hazardous wastes and their disposal.
- **Rotterdam Convention (1998)**: Promotes shared responsibility and cooperative efforts in the international trade of certain hazardous chemicals.
- **Stockholm Convention (2001)**: Aims to eliminate or restrict the production and use of Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs).

**World Migration Report 2026**

**Syllabus: GS2/ Indian Diaspora**

**Context**

- The **International Organization for Migration** released the **World Migration Report 2026**.

**Key Findings of the Report**

- International migrants accounted for **3.7% of the global population** in 2024, compared to 2.9% in 1990.
- The **largest migration corridor** globally remains **Mexico–United States Corridor with nearly 11 million migrants**.

- Other major corridors include: Afghanistan–Iran Corridor, Syria–Türkiye Corridor and Russia–Ukraine Corridor.

#### Additional Information - The International Organization for Migration (IOM)

- It is the principal UN agency for migration.
- Established in - 1951
- Headquarter - Geneva, Switzerland.
- Objective - It promotes humane, orderly migration and provides humanitarian assistance to migrants, refugees, and internally displaced persons.
- India has been an official member state of the IOM since 2008

### India to host 1st IBCA Summit

#### Syllabus: GS3/Environment



#### In News







- The Union Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched the website and logo for the 1st International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) Summit 2026, in New Delhi.

#### International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA)

- Headquarters - India,
- Objective - It is a multi-country, multi-agency coalition of 95 big cat range countries with an interest in big cat conservation.
- Genesis: IBCA was launched by the Prime Minister of India in 2023 during the event 'Commemorating 50 years of Project Tiger'.

- Aim: Conserving seven big cats - Tiger, Lion, Leopard, Snow Leopard, Cheetah, Jaguar, and Puma.
- Members: Nicaragua, Eswatini, India, Somalia and Liberia have signed the Framework Agreement to formally become members of the IBCA.

#### Conservation Status of 7 Big Cats

Big Cat	IUCN Status	CITES Status	Wildlife Protection Act, 1972
 <b>Tiger</b> ( <i>Panthera tigris</i> )	Endangered	Appendix I	Schedule I
 <b>Lion</b> ( <i>Panthera leo</i> )	Vulnerable	Appendix I	Schedule I
 <b>Leopard</b> ( <i>Panthera pardus</i> )	Vulnerable	Appendix I	Schedule I
 <b>Snow Leopard</b> ( <i>Panthera uncia</i> )	Vulnerable	Appendix I	Schedule I
 <b>Cheetah</b> ( <i>Acinonyx jubatus</i> )	Vulnerable	Appendix I	Schedule I
 <b>Jaguar</b> ( <i>Panthera onca</i> )	Near Threatened	Appendix I	Not found in India
 <b>Puma</b> ( <i>Puma concolor</i> )	Least Concern	Appendix I	Not found in India

### Samagra Shiksha Teachers

#### Syllabus: GS2/Government Initiatives

#### Context

- Delhi Government has approved a substantial increase in the salaries of vocational teachers and those working under the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan.

#### Samagra Shiksha Scheme

- Launched in - 2018-19
- Financing - Centrally Sponsored Scheme

#### Subsumed erstwhile Centrally Sponsored Schemes:

1. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA)
2. Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and
3. Teacher Education (TE)

**Objectives:**

- To implement SDG 4, Right to Education and New Education Policy.
- to treat school education holistically from pre-school to Class 12
- Coverage: 1.16 million schools, over 156 million students and 5.7 million Teachers of Govt. and Aided schools.

**Mizoram Ginger Mission**  
**Syllabus: GS3/Economy**


**In News**

- The Union Minister for Development of North Eastern Region (MDoNER) launched the Mizoram Ginger Mission.

**Mizoram Ginger Mission**

- It is a Ginger Cultivation & Value Chain Development for the State of Mizoram.
- This mission is a key component of the broader “Brand North East” vision, which assigns specific USPs to states, such as Sikkim (Organic State), Arunachal Pradesh (Kiwi), Tripura (Queen Pineapple), Nagaland (Coffee), and Meghalaya (Lakadong Turmeric).
- Objective - to improve farmer incomes by reducing price gaps, minimising post-harvest losses, and promoting better use of GI-certified

ginger through coordinated efforts among multiple ministries.

- Mizoram is known for its Geographical Indication (GI)- certified ginger varieties.

**Additional Information - Ginger**

- It is one of the oldest known spices, and is esteemed for its aroma and pungency. It originated in South – East Asia

**Climatic & Soil Requirements**

- **Climate:** Warm and humid tropical climate.
- **Temperature:** Performs best in temperatures ranging between 19 - 28 degree celsius.
- **Rainfall:** Requires moderate to high rainfall of about 150 to 250cm every year. It does not tolerate frost or prolonged waterlogging.
- **Soil:** Loose, fertile, well-drained sandy loam or clay loam rich in organic matter.
- **Global Standing:** India is the largest producer of ginger in the world. Major producing states include Kerala, Odisha, Meghalaya, West Bengal, and Arunachal Pradesh.

**Government Banned Sugar Exports**

**Syllabus: GS3/ Economy**

**Context**

- The Government of India, through the Directorate General of Foreign Trade, placed exports of raw, white, and refined sugar under the prohibited category till September 30, 2026.

**Reasons Behind the Sugar Export Ban**

- **El Niño and Monsoon Concerns:** The government fears that a possible El Niño event may weaken the monsoon, reduce sugarcane cultivation, and affect future sugar production.
- **Fertiliser Supply Risks: Geopolitical tensions in West Asia** may disrupt fertiliser supplies, which is significant because sugarcane is a fertiliser-intensive crop.

- **Maintaining Adequate Domestic Stocks:** The ban aims to preserve sufficient sugar stocks to control prices, prevent shortages, and ensure domestic food security.

### Assam Ships First Legal Agarwood Chips to West Asia

**Syllabus:GS3/Economy**



#### In News

- Assam legally approved export of agarwood chips to Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

#### Agarwood

- It is also known as oud.
- It is produced from resin formed in infected *Aquilaria* and *Gyrinops* trees.
- Agarwood is a highly valued material used globally in luxury perfumes, incense, cosmetics, and traditional products.
- Agarwood is grown in countries such as India, Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Laos, and Bhutan.
- In India, key species like *Aquilaria malaccensis* and *Aquilaria khasiana* are found mainly in the Northeast, including Assam and surrounding states.

- Agarwood is conserved under **Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES)**.

### Withholding Tax Syllabus: GS3/Economy

#### Context

- Amid the West Asia conflict, the government is reportedly considering slashing the ‘withholding tax’ rate from 20% to the earlier 5% as it looks to revive overseas inflows.

#### Withholding Tax

- **Withholding tax, or WHT, is a tax collected at the source of income.**
- Instead of waiting for an investor or foreign company to pay taxes at the end of the financial year, the government requires the payer to deduct a portion of the income before it is remitted to the recipient.
- The deducted amount is then directly deposited with the government.
- **In simple terms**, whenever income is earned whether through employment, investments, royalties or other sources the government ensures tax collection in advance through withholding tax.
- **Hong Kong and Singapore don’t have a withholding tax.**

#### Significance of Slashing Withholding Tax

- **Attracts Foreign Investment:** Lower withholding tax increases returns for foreign investors, encouraging greater FDI and portfolio investments.
- **Improves Ease of Doing Business:** Reduces tax and compliance burden on companies engaged in cross-border transactions.
- **Boosts Capital and Trade Flows:** Encourages international trade, technology transfer, and movement of global capital.

- **Supports Economic Growth:** Increased investment and business activity can generate employment, innovation, and higher economic productivity.

### Prime Minister's Visit to the UAE

Syllabus: GS2/IR

#### Context

- **PM Modi made a landmark diplomatic stopover in UAE, first stop in his five-nation trip to the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway and Italy.**

#### Key Outcomes

- MoU on Strategic Collaboration between Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited (ISPRL) and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC).
- Strategic Collaboration Agreement between Indian Oil Limited (IOCL) Company and Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) on supplies of Liquefied Petroleum gas (LPG).

#### Framework for the Strategic Defence Partnership:

- MoU between Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) and Drydocks World (DDW) on setting up a Ship Repair Cluster at Vadinar, Gujarat.
- Cooperation includes offshore fabrication, under the Maritime Development Fund Scheme launched by the Government of India.

#### Additional Information - India and UAE

- **Political:** India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) established **diplomatic relations in 1972.**
- Relationships were upgraded to a **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership (CSP) in 2017.**
- **Trade and Investment Ties:** Bilateral merchandise trade between the two countries crossed US\$100 billion for the first time.
- **Space Cooperation:** Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the UAE Space Agency signed an MoU regarding cooperation

in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes in 2016.

- **Indian Community:** Indian expatriate community of approximately **3.5 million is the largest ethnic community in UAE constituting roughly about 35% of the country's population.**
- **Multilateral Cooperation:** India and the UAE are currently part of several plurilateral platforms such as **India-Middle East EU Economic Corridor (IMEC), I2U2 (India-Israel-UAE-USA) and UFI (UAE-France-India) Trilateral, etc.**

### Chahbahar port

Syllabus: GS2/IR



#### Context

- **Iranian Foreign Minister described Chabahar port a "golden gateway", expressing the hope that India will continue to develop the strategic port.**

#### Chahbahar Port

- **Location:** It is a seaport in Chabahar located in **southeastern Iran, on the Gulf of Oman.**
- **It consists of two separate ports named Shahid Kalantari and Shahid Beheshti.**

- It is only about **170 kilometers west of the Pakistani port of Gwadar.**
- **Strategic location:** India needs access to iron from Afghanistan's Hajigak mine and other natural resources from the Central Asian countries of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, which is made possible by the Chabahar port.
- **INSTC:** The port is also part of **International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)**, a multimodal transport project to connect the Indian Ocean to Northern Europe.

### **Miyawaki Forest Plantation** **Syllabus: GS3/ Environment**



#### **Context**

- The Delhi government's Forest Department has planned a Miyawaki plantation drive at the Asola-Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary.

#### **Miyawaki Technique**

- **Origin:** The Miyawaki technique, Often referred to as the 'pot plantation method', was developed by renowned Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki in the 1970s.
- It is a revolutionary method for creating dense forests in small urban spaces.
- **Principle:** It involves planting trees and shrubs close to one another to accelerate their growth. Plants grow 10 times faster with this

technique, making it a practical solution for urban areas.

- **Significance:** In urban areas, the method is known to have successfully converted barren, polluted lands into thriving green ecosystems, simultaneously managing industrial waste and curbing pollution.

#### **Asola-Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary**

- The Asola-Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary is located in southern Delhi and extends into parts of Faridabad in Haryana.
- The sanctuary lies along the Southern Ridge of the Aravalli Range, which is one of the oldest mountain systems in the world.
- The sanctuary was declared a protected area in 1991 under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- The sanctuary is also known as the "green lungs" of Delhi and acts as a natural ecological barrier against the eastward expansion of the Thar Desert.

### **Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA)** **project** **Syllabus: GS3/Defence**



#### **Context**

- The Union Minister for Defence laid the foundation stone for the **Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) project** at Puttaparthi, Andhra Pradesh.

### Advanced Medium Combat Aircraft (AMCA) programme facility

- is being developed by the Aeronautical Development Agency under the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- It will serve as the integration, development and flight testing hub for India's indigenous fifth-generation stealth fighter aircraft programme.
- The AMCA fighter aircraft will feature stealth technology, twin-engine super cruise capability and advanced avionics.

### **'Abhay': AI-powered verification system** **Syllabus: GS3/Cyber Security**

#### In News

- The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has launched an AI-based helpbot called "Abhay" for authentication of CBI notices.

#### 'Abhay'

- It is the AI-powered chatbot-style verification mechanism for the public to verify notices issued by CBI.
- It is designed to protect the citizens from the growing menace of cyber fraud and digital arrest scams.
- It has been designed keeping in mind data confidentiality and the requirement for a public-facing authentication mechanism.

### **India's First Satellite-tagged Ganges Soft-shell Turtle**

#### **Syllabus: GS3/Environment**



#### In News

- India's first satellite-tagged Ganges soft-shell turtle was released in Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve in Assam.
- Assam is one of the world's top priority areas in freshwater turtle conservation. Of the eight soft-shell turtles reported from India, five are known from the Kaziranga landscape.

#### Ganges soft-shell turtle (*Nilssonina gangetica*),

- **Characteristics:** It can be differentiated from other riverine turtles by its distinct arrowhead-shaped markings on the top of the head.
- It feeds on fish, birds, reptiles, invertebrates, carrion, and aquatic plants.
- **Habitat and Distribution:** It mainly lives in rivers and large canals with muddy bottoms and flowing, turbid water, though it may also use ponds and lakes.
- It is found across the northern plains of the Indian subcontinent, including the Indus, Ganga, Narmada, Mahanadi, and Brahmaputra river basins in India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan, and Afghanistan.
- In India, the species inhabits large rivers, lakes, and reservoirs.
- **Ecological Role :** It is a major river predator and helps clean up the system by feeding on dead and decaying animal matter.
- **Threats :** It faces severe threats from illegal hunting, international trade, and habitat destruction.
- **Protection status :** It is a Schedule I animal under the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972.
- It is recorded as endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List.
- It is included in CITES Appendix I, prohibiting all forms of international commercial trade.

## India-Sweden Upgrade Ties to Strategic Partnership

Syllabus: GS2/ International Relations



### Context

- India and Sweden elevated their bilateral relationship to a Strategic Partnership, during an official visit of PM Modi to Sweden.

### Key Highlights of the Visit

- PM Modi received Sweden's Royal Order of Polar Star and Commander Grand Cross, the highest recognition and honour that can be conferred upon a head of government.

### India-Sweden Relations

- **Diplomatic Relations:** India and Sweden established diplomatic relations in 1948.
- Sweden hosted the first India-Nordic Summit in 2018, strengthening India's engagement with the Nordic region.
- India and Sweden jointly launched the Leadership Group for Industry Transition (LeadIT) at the UN Climate Action Summit in 2019.
- LeadIT promotes low-carbon industrial transition and sustainable manufacturing practices.

## Indus Waters Treaty

Syllabus: GS2/ International Relation



### In Context

- India has rejected the latest ruling of the Court of Arbitration (CoA), a five-member arbitral panel set up in 2023 at Pakistan's request to settle a dispute over the design of India's Kishenganga and Ratle hydroelectric projects in Jammu & Kashmir.

### Indus Waters Treaty

- **Background** - In 1947, the partition had cut the Indus river system into two between India and Pakistan.
- **Mediated by** - The World Bank
- **Signed in** - it was signed in 1960 by former PM Jawaharlal Nehru and then President of Pakistan, Ayub Khan.
- **Transboundary river** - The Indus River is a transboundary river that flows through Pakistan (47%), India (39%), Tibet (8%), and Afghanistan (6%). It is the longest river in Pakistan.
- **Note** - In India, the Indus basin spreads over J&K, HP, Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, and Chandigarh.

**Major tributaries of the Indus River are:**

River	Source	Joins
Jhelum	Spring at Verinag, Kashmir Valley	Chenab at Trimmu, Pakistan
Chenab	Chandra and Bhaga streams near Bara Lacha Pass	Satluj after receiving Jhelum and Ravi
Ravi	Kullu hills near Rohtang Pass	Chenab near Rangpur, Pakistan
Beas	Near Rohtang Pass	Satluj at Harike Barrage, India
Satluj	Manasarovar-Rakas Lakes, Tibet	Indus a few kilometres above Mithankot, Pakistan

**Provisions of Indus Water Treaty**

- It allocated the three western rivers (i.e., Indus, Chenab, and Jhelum) to Pakistan for unrestricted use, barring certain non-consumptive, agricultural and domestic uses by India.
- It allocated the three eastern rivers, (i.e., Ravi, Beas and Sutlej) to India for unrestricted usage.
- This meant that 80% of the share of water went to Pakistan, leaving 20% of water for use by India.

**Annexure C and D**

- Though Pakistan has rights over waters of Jhelum, Chenab and Indus, but:

1. Annexure C of the IWT allows India certain agricultural uses
2. Annexure D allows India to build ‘run of the river’ hydropower projects (projects not requiring live storage of water).

**Permanent Indus Commission**

- The treaty also required that both countries should establish a Permanent Indus Commission constituted by permanent commissioners of both sides.
- It functions as the first stop for resolution of conflicts.
- It should meet at least once a year.

**Prime Minister’s Visit to Netherlands**
**Context**

- PM Modi paid an official visit to the Netherlands.
- Elevation to Strategic Partnership: India and the Netherlands upgraded bilateral relations to a “Strategic Partnership”.

**India- Netherlands Relations**

- Diplomatic relations: India and the Netherlands established diplomatic relations in 1947, with 2026 marking 79 years of bilateral diplomatic ties.
- Economic Cooperation: India and the Netherlands formalized the Joint Trade & Investment Committee (JTIC) in 2025, strengthening bilateral trade, two-way investment cooperation, and collaboration in technology, MSMEs, and emerging sectors.
- Cultural Cooperation: India and the Netherlands signed an MoU in 2025 for cooperation in the development of the National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC) at Lothal, Gujarat.

### Additional Information - The National Maritime Heritage Complex (NMHC)



- It is a world-class tourism facility under construction in Lothal, Gujarat to showcase India's 4,500-year-old maritime history.
- **Location:** Lothal, Gujarat (Ancient Indus Valley Civilization port city).
- **Nodal Ministry:** Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways (MoPSW) under the Sagarmala Programme.
- **Scale:** Spread over 400 acres; set to be the world's largest maritime museum complex.
- **Key Feature:** Will host the world's tallest lighthouse museum.
- **Executing Agency:** Indian Port Rail Corporation Limited (IPRCL).

### Bhojshala

**Syllabus: GS1/Art and Culture**



### In News

- The Madhya Pradesh High Court declared the Bhojshala complex in Dhar district a Hindu temple.

### Bhojshala Complex

- **Raja Bhoja**, the greatest ruler of the Paramara dynasty, founded the famous Bhojshala at Dhar around 1000–1055 A.D. as a major center of learning dedicated to Goddess Saraswati.
- Later, the structure was converted into the **Kamal Maula Mosque** during Muslim rule.
- It served as a premier college and centre of Sanskrit learning. The mosque still contains carved pillars, ceilings, and stone inscriptions from the original Bhojshala.
- Important inscriptions include Sanskrit grammar tables, hymns to Vishnu, praises of Paramara kings, and the Sanskrit drama Karpuramanjari written by Madana during the reign of Arjunavarma Deva.

### Jaggery Sector in India

**Syllabus: GS3/Economy**



### In News

- **Jaggery production in India** is a key agro-processing sector that is supporting rural livelihoods, farmer incomes, and value addition through cottage industries.

### Jaggery

- It is commonly known as gur and is a traditional, unrefined, natural sweetener.
- It is produced by concentrating sugarcane juice without the use of chemicals.
- It is widely consumed across Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean under various local names.

### Jaggery Production in India

- India produces over 70% of the world's jaggery, making it the largest global producer.
- Uttar Pradesh contributed 48.5 percent of total production, followed by Maharashtra (24.1 percent) and Karnataka (10.5 percent).

### Saranda Forest

#### Syllabus: GS3/Environment

### In News

- The Jharkhand government has filed a review petition in the Supreme Court against its earlier order directing the state to notify the Saranda elephant forests as a wildlife sanctuary within three months.
- Jharkhand argues that declaring the sanctuary could affect tribal habitations, roads, and infrastructure, requiring further studies.

### Saranda Forest

- It is located about 122 km from Jamshedpur in Jharkhand.
- It is the largest Sal forest in Asia and is known as the "land of seven hundred hills."
- It is part of the Chhotanagpur biogeographic zone and connects with forests in Odisha and Chhattisgarh, creating a continuous wildlife habitat.
- Flora and fauna - It includes endangered flying lizards and large elephant populations, and forms an important migratory elephant corridor.
- Major tree species - Sal, Mahua, and Kusum.

- Tribes - Ho, Munda, Uraon, and Santhal peoples,
- Significance - It holds deep cultural significance for local tribes, whose traditions, rituals, and sacred groves ("Sarna") are closely tied to the forest ecosystem.

### Ebola Outbreak

#### Syllabus: GS2/Health

### Context

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared an international health emergency after an Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo killed over 80 people.

### Ebola virus disease (EVD)

- It is formerly known as Ebola haemorrhagic fever. It is a rare but severe, often fatal illness in humans.
- First found in - Guinea in December 2013..
- Transmission - The virus is transmitted to people from wild animals and spreads in the human population (Zoonotic nature).
- Host - fruit bats of the Pteropodidae family are natural Ebola virus hosts.
- Symptoms - Fever, fatigue, muscle, pain, headache, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhoea, rash, symptoms of impaired kidney and liver function.
- Treatment - The Ervebo vaccine has been shown to be effective in protecting people from the species Zaire ebolavirus. Remdesivir was also tested as an Ebola treatment

### Solar Wind Magnetosphere Ionosphere Link

#### Explorer (SMILE)

#### Syllabus: GS3/ Science and Technology

### Context

- A joint mission of the European Space Agency and the Chinese Academy of Sciences named SMILE is being developed to study how Earth's magnetic shield responds to solar storms and space weather events.

### SMILE Mission

- **SMILE stands for Solar wind Magnetosphere Ionosphere Link Explorer.**
- **Launched by -** is a joint ESA-China satellite mission launched on May 19, 2026.
- **Objective -** Exploring the interface where solar winds collide with the outer boundary of Earth's magnetosphere

### Global Space Missions

- **Parker Solar Probe (NASA):** Launched in 2018; sweeps directly inside the Sun's coronal atmosphere (within 6.5 million km) using an advanced carbon-composite heat shield.
- **Solar Orbiter (ESA & NASA):** Launched in 2020 to capture the first-ever close-up images of the Sun's polar zones by shifting outside the traditional ecliptic plane.
- **PUNCH Mission (NASA):** Targeted to track solar winds and coronal mass ejections passing from the corona directly into the broader heliosphere.

### **PM Modi Visit to Norway** **Syllabus: GS2/IR**

#### Context

- **Prime Minister Modi lands for the first bilateral visit by an Indian Prime Minister to Norway after 43 years.**

#### Key Highlights of the Meet

- **Green Strategic Partnership:** India and Norway formally declared the upgrade of bilateral ties to a Green Strategic Partnership to ensure increased collaboration in sectors ranging from Clean Energy to Climate Resilience, Blue economy to green shipping.
- **Norway Joins Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI):** Norway formally joined India's IPOI framework (launched 2019), which promotes a free, open, and rules-based Indo-Pacific.
- **Triangular Cooperation Agreement:** India and Norway will jointly offer India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) (the Aadhaar-

UPI-CoWIN stack) to countries of the Global South.

- **Diplomatic Outcomes:** Norway reaffirmed support for India's permanent seat in a reformed UN Security Council.
- PM Modi awarded the **Grand Cross of the Royal Norwegian Order of Merit by King Harald V, Norway's highest civilian honour** for foreign heads of government.

#### India – Norway Bilateral Ties

- India and Norway established **bilateral relations in 1947.**
- The **India-Nordic Summit format** allowed more regular and structured interactions at Prime Ministerial levels.
- The **first summit was held in 2018 at Stockholm.**
- Norway has been **supporting India's perusal to become a permanent member** of a reformed UN Security Council.
- **Arctic/ Polar:** India set up its first permanent research station '**Himadri**' in the Arctic in 2008 at Svalbard, Norway.
- The **National Centre for Polar and Ocean Research (NCPOR)** carries out multiple scientific expeditions to the Arctic every year.
- **India has also been an Observer State in the Arctic Council since 2013.**
- **Space: ISRO uses Norway's Svalbard ground station** on commercial terms to receive data from IRS satellites.
- **KSAT is also setting up ISRO's antenna in Svalbard.**

### **India-South Korea Ties** **Syllabus: GS2/IR**

#### In News

- **The Indian Defence Minister's visit to Seoul after the South Korean President's visit to India** highlights the growing strength and strategic importance of India-South Korea relations.

### India-South Korea

- **Special Strategic Partnership:** Upgraded in 2015; links India's Act East Policy with South Korea's Indo-Pacific strategy.
- **Defense Success:** Shifted from buyer-seller to co-production via the K9-Vajra self-propelled artillery guns.
- **Supply Chain Resilience:** Jointly working to de-risk supply chains and reduce economic over-reliance on China.
- **Climate Alignment:** South Korea joined the India-led International Solar Alliance (ISA).

### Challenges

- **Trade Imbalance:** India's widening trade deficit causes economic friction.
- **China Dilemma:** India is structurally assertive against Beijing, while South Korea remains economically tied to China.

### RTI Act Does not Apply to Cricket Board: CIC Syllabus: GS2/Polity & Governance

#### Context

- The Central Information Commission (CIC) held that the **Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) does not fall within the ambit of a "public authority" under the Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005.**

### Central Information Commission (CIC)

- **Established** - in 2005 by the Central Government under the provisions of Right to Information (RTI) Act, 2005.
- **Objective** - It hears appeals against public authorities who have not provided information satisfactorily to the public and also addresses major issues concerning the RTI Act.
- **Annual report** - CIC submits an annual report to the Union government on the implementation of the provisions of RTI Act.

### Composition of CIC

- **Head** - The CIC is headed by the **Chief Information Commissioner and not more than ten Information Commissioners.**
- **Tenure** - The **Chief Information Commissioner holds office for five years or until he attains the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier. He is not eligible for reappointment.**
- **Appointment of the commissioner in CIC** - The commissioners are appointed by the **President on the recommendation of a selection committee.**
- **Selection committee** - It consists of the **Prime Minister as Chairperson, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and a Union Cabinet Minister nominated by the Prime Minister.**

### State Information Commission

- **The Right to Information Act of 2005 provides for the creation of a State Information Commission at the state level.**
- The State Information Commission is a high powered independent body which inter-alia looks into the complaints made to it and decides the appeals.
- It entertains complaints and appeals pertaining to offices, financial institutions, public sector undertakings, etc under the concerned state government.
- **Composition** - **State Chief Information Commissioner and not more than ten State Information Commissioners appointed by the Governor.**

### Silver Syllabus: GS3/Economy

#### Context

- The government has shifted silver imports to the "restricted" category and **imposed a 15% import duty to curb rising imports and protect domestic interests.**

## Silver

- It is a **relatively soft, lustrous precious metal.**
- It has highest **electrical and thermal conductivity** among all metals, critical for **electronics, circuit boards, connectors, batteries, and automotive systems.**
- It is mainly found in **ores like argentite and chlorargyrite (horn silver).**
- **Mexico is the largest silver producer in the world.**
- India imports silver mainly from the United Arab Emirates, Britain and China.



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