UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelim Bits 05-02-2025

Brucellosis

Why in News?

An 8-year-old girl from Kottakkal in Malappuram district of Kerala died at the Government Medical College Hospital, Kozhikode, recently after undergoing around two months of treatment for brucellosis.

- It is a bacterial infection caused by the consumption of ***unpasteurized milk.***
- **Caused by -** Various Brucella species.
- It is also known as undulant fever, Mediterranean fever, Malta fever
- It mainly infects cattle, swine, goats, sheep and dogs.
- **Transmission -** Humans acquire it through direct contact with infected animals, by eating or drinking contaminated animal products or by inhaling airborne agents.
- Most cases are caused by ingesting unpasteurized milk or cheese from infected goats or sheep. Human-to-human transmission is ***very rare.***
- **Symptoms -** Fever, weakness, weight loss, and general a feeling of discomfort. In many patients, they can be mild and may not get diagnosed at all.
- **Incubation Period -** It can vary from one week to two months, but it usually lasts between two and four weeks.
- **Vulnerable age group -** It affects people of all ages. Transmission primarily affects farmers, butchers, hunters, veterinarians and laboratory personnel.
- **Treatment -** Treatment options include taking doxycycline 100 mg tablets twice a day for 45 days, and streptomycin 1 g daily for 15 days as per the advice of the doctors.
- **Prevention -** Vaccination of cattle, goats and sheep is among the prevention options.
- Pasteurisation of milk for direct consumption and for creating derivatives such as cheese is an important step to prevent its transmission from animals to humans.

Reference

The Hindu | What is brucellosis?

Rare Diseases in India

Why in News?

Recently, a 19-year-old child actress, Suhani Bhatnagar, died due to dermatomyositis, a rare disease

Dermatomyositis

- It is an ***uncommon inflammatory*** disease marked by muscle weakness and a

distinctive skin rash.
- The condition can affect adults and children, affects more females than males.
- There's ***no cure*** for dermatomyositis.

Rare disease

- A disease is considered rare if it affects fewer than 200,000 people in the U.S. and fewer than 1 in 10,000 people in the European Union.
- **Definition –** According to WHO, Rare disease is a lifelong disease with a prevalence of 10 or fewer per 10,000 population.
- According to Organization of Rare Diseases India (ORDI) defined rare disease as a disease when it affects 1 in 5,000 people.

Rare Disease Day *was observed on the last day of February i.e., 28th February (or 29 in leap years).*

- **Spread –** It affect approximately 3.5% to 5.9% of the population.
- **Causes –** 72% of rare diseases are genetic, with over 7000 characterized by diverse disorders and symptoms.

Status in India

- India lacks a standard definition for rare diseases.
- Estimate suggests that about 8 crore-10 crore Indians suffer from one rare disease or another, over 75% are children.
- India accounts for one-third of the global rare disease incidence, with over 450 identified diseases.
- These range from widely known ones such as Spinal Muscular Atrophy and Gaucher's disease to lesser-known ones such as Mucopolysaccharidosis type 1 and Whipple's disease.
- **Centres of Excellence –** They are institutions identified by the central government under the National Policy for Rare Diseases (NPRD), 2021.
- **Aim –** To treat patients suffering from rare diseases actively.
- Currently, ***63 rare diseases*** are included under NPRD on recommendation of Central Technical Committee for Rare Diseases (CTCRD).

Reference

The Hindu | Rare diseases

Anti-conversion Bill, Rajasthan

Why in News?

The Rajasthan Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Bill, 2025 was introduced in the ongoing Budget Session of the state Assembly recently.

- **Provisions of the bill -** Religious conversion by misrepresentation, force, undue

influence, coercion, allurement or by any fraudulent means or by marriage has been made an offence in the Bill.
- The offence under the anti-conversion bill will be ***cognisable and non-bailable*** and triable by a court.
- Individuals who desire to convert their religion are required to give a declaration in the prescribed form ***at least 60 days*** in advance to the District Magistrate.
- The burden of proof that a religious conversion was not done through unlawful means rests on the person who has "caused" the conversion.
- The court may grant appropriate compensation to victims of unlawful conversion, which may extend to a maximum of ***₹5 lakh.***
- Repeat offenders may face double the punishment provided under the law for each subsequent offense.
- Marriages done for the sole purpose of conversion will be deemed invalid by family courts.
- **Punishment and penalties -** The Bill provisions imprisonment for a term not less than one year.
    - It may extend to 5 years with a fine of Rs 15,000.
- Those who violate the rules in respect of a minor, a woman or a person belonging to the Scheduled Caste or Scheduled Tribe shall be punished with imprisonment for a term of 2 years.
    - It may extend to 10 years along with a fine of Rs 25,000.
- In case of ***mass conversion***, the bill provisions 3 years of jail extending up to 10 years and a fine of Rs 50,000.
- Marriages done for the sole purpose of conversion will be deemed ***invalid*** by family courts.
- Once passed, Rajasthan will become the ***12th state*** to have an anti-conversion law.
- **Other states having anti-conversion law**
    - Odisha, Arunachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Jharkhand, Haryana, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.

Reference

The Indian Express | Anti-conversion bill

Golden-Headed Cisticola

Why in News?

According to bird watchers, the recent discovery of a golden-headed cisticola in the southern Western Ghats marks the 1st sighting after an extensive gap.

- It is a tiny bird, *shines brightly with its golden crown* and captivating song.
- **Scientific Name** – Cisticola exilis.
- **Discovered in** – Mathikettan Shola National Park, Idukki, Kerala.
- It is known as ***Bright-Capped Cisticola***.
- **Habitat –** Grasslands, sub-coastal areas, wetlands, savannas, woodlands, scrublands, swamp margins, rivers, and irrigated farmlands.
- **Distribution** – Western Australia, north-east to Darwin, Cape York and *India* and

southern China.

Golden-Headed Cisticola has been observed in parts of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, northern Kerala and 1st time found in the southern part of the Palakkad gap in the Western Ghats.

- **Morphology –** Small, sandy-colored bird with short tail, cream-colored underside and brown upper side.
- Streaks of black or dark brown on the upper part of their body, black wings, golden head, throat is white and back of their neck is dull shade of gold.



- **Sexual dimorphism**
  - **Male** – Has distinct ***golden-orange plumage*** on their head, neck, and chest during breeding.
  - It also has pinkish beaks and black streaks on their backs.
- **Call –** It produces a *variety of sounds distinct from other birds* range from a teewip to wheezz, whit-whit.
- **Diet –** It is omnivorous, feed on invertebrates such as insects, small slugs, and eat grass seeds.
- **Threats –** Urbanization
  - Land development
  - Changes in agricultural practices
  - Wetland degradation.
- **Conservation Status**
- **IUCN** – Least Concern.
- **Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972** – Schedule II.

References

1. The Hindu| Golden-headed Cisticola
2. Thai National Parks| Bright-capped cisticola
3. Simply Birding| Golden-headed Cisticola's Threats

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History, Art and Culture

State Emblem of India

Home Ministry asked state governments to prevent misuse of State Emblem of India.

• It is the official seal of the Government of India, and an adaptation from the *Sarnath Lion Capital of Asoka*.

• **Structure** – Lion Capital showing 3 Lions mounted on the abacus,
- Centre – Dharma Chakra.
- Right – Bull.
- Left – Galloping horse.

• **Motto** – *Satyameva Jayate* (in Devanagari script), inscribed below the profile of Lion Capital.

• **Respective Act** – Prohibition of Improper Use Act, 2005.

Geography

Indo- Bangladesh Border

• India and Bangladesh have a border that spans 4,096.7 km, making it the longest land border India has with any neighboring country.

• **Bordering States** - West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura & Mizoram.

• **Fencing** -A total of 3,141 kilometers has been fenced along the India-Bangladesh border, which encompasses all eastern states, from the total 4,156.

• Over 800 km of the India- Bangladesh border still needs fencing.

Polity & Governance

Gyan Bharatam Mission

Union Budget 2025-26, announced new Gyan Bharatam Mission.

• **Launched in** – *2003*.
• **Launched by** – Ministry of Tourism and Culture.
• **Aim** – To preserve and *digitize India's rich manuscript heritage*, ensuring knowledge accessibility for future generations.
• **Purposes** – Documentation and conservation of our manuscript heritage with academic institutions, museums, libraries and private collectors.
• It will be undertaken to cover *more than 1 crore manuscripts*.

Atal Tinkering Laboratories (ATLs)

50,000 (ATLs) will be set up in government schools in next 5 years.

• **Launched in** – *2016*.
• **Umbrella scheme –** Atal Innovation Mission (AIM).
• **Nodal Ministry** – NITI Aayog.
• **Vision** – Cultivate one million children in India as Neoteric Innovators.
• **ATL** – It provides *activity-based learning in the identified schools* across the country where young minds can give shape to their ideas for societal problems.

National Bamboo Mission (NBM)

• **Launched in** – *2018*.
• **Nodal Ministry** – Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.
• **Objectives** – It provides *assistance to both the government & private sectors* for the propagation and cultivation of,
  - Bamboo in non-forest land
  - Bamboo treatment
  - Establishment of markets
  - Incubation centers
  - Value added product development & processing
  - Development of tools & equipments.
• **Funded by** – Both Centre and State government for all states except North Eastern & Hilly states.

Soil Health Card (SHC) Scheme

• **Launched in** – *2014*.
• **Nodal Ministry** – Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.
• **Umbrella scheme –** Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY).
• **SHC** – A massive *programme of soil sampling, testing and generation* of SHCs.
• Assist *State Governments* to issue soil health cards to all farmers in the country.

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana- National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM)

• **Launched in** – *2010*.
• **Nodal Ministry** – Ministry of Rural Development.
• **Aim** – To reduce poverty by *enabling poor households to access gainful self-employment* and skilled wage employment resulting in sustainable and livelihood options for the poor.
• **NRLM** – It was renamed as Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihood Mission (DAY-NRLM) in 2016.
• **Funded by** – Both central and state governments.

International Relations and Issues

India's Contribution to UN Regular Budget

• The UN Regular Budget is the ***annual budget*** for the UN**.**
• The General Assembly approves the budget, which is funded by contributions from member states.
• It funds agencies like the World Food Programme, the UN Refugee Agency, and the children's fund (UNICEF).
• India has paid USD 37.64 million for the 2025 United Nations Regular Budget.
• India is now on the "honour roll" of ***35 member states*** that paid their assessments fully and on time.

Agriculture

Central Rice Research Institute (CRRI)

• **Established in** – 1946.
• **Established at** – Bidhyadharpur, Cuttack, Odisha.
• **Under** – Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR).
• **CRRI** – It is committed to provide the *highest quality analysis of rice* conforming to international standards.
• **3 sub-stations at** – Hazaribag (Jharkhand), Gerua (Assam), and Naira (Andhra Pradesh).
• **Accredited from** – National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) under the *standard for chemical testing.*

Security

Indian Army to Use Bamboo Based Composites

• **Purpose** – For High Altitude Bunker Construction.
• **MOU** - Signed between Indian Army's 4 Corps and IIT Guwahati.
• It will replace traditional materials for high altitude bunkers.

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