

## UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelim Bits 12-04-2025

### Modernization of Command Area Development and Water Management

**Prelims** - *Economic and Social Development-Sustainable Development.*

#### Why in News?

*The Union Cabinet recently approved the Modernization of Command Area Development and Water Management (M-CADWM) as a sub-scheme of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) for the period 2025-2026.*

- **Aim** - Modernization of the irrigation water supply network to supply of irrigation water from existing canals or other sources in a designated cluster.
- **Micro irrigation facilitation** - It will make robust backend infrastructure for micro-irrigation by farmers from established source to the Farm gate upto 1 Ha with underground pressurized piped irrigation.
- **Use of technology** - Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA), Internet of things technology will be used for water accounting and water management.
- **Irrigation Management Transfer (IMT)** - Water User Society (WUS) will manage Irrigation assets.
- The Water User Societies will be linked with existing Economic Entities like FPO or PACS for five years.
- **Benefits** - This will increase the Water Use Efficiency (WUE) at the farm level, increase agriculture production & productivity; and thereby increase the income of farmers.

#### Command Area Development And Water Management (CAD&WM) Programme

- The programme was launched in 1974-75.
- It is being implemented under Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojna (PMKSY) - Har Khet Ko Pani from 2015-16.
- The ongoing CADWM programme has now been restricted to implementation of CAD works of 99 prioritized Accelerated Irrigation Benefits Programme (AIBP) projects.
- **Components of CADWM Programme**
- **Structural Intervention**
  - On-Farm Development (OFD) works;
  - Construction of field, intermediate & link drains;
  - Correction of system deficiencies; and
  - Reclamation of waterlogged areas.
- **Non-Structural Intervention** - Activities directed at strengthening of Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) including:
  - One time Functional Grant to the registered Water Users' Associations (WUAs);
  - One time Infrastructure Grant to the registered WUAs;
  - Trainings, demonstration

## Reference

[PIB | Modernization of Command Area Development and Water Management](#)

### Niveshak Didi

**Prelims** - *Current events of national and international importance| Economic and Social Development.*

**Mains (GS II)** - *Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.*

### Why in News?

Recently, a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) has signed jointly to launch the Phase 2 of the Niveshak Didi.

- **Niveshak Didi** - A unique initiative that **trains women postal workers and community leaders** to act as financial educators within their local regions.
- **Aim** - To scale financial literacy among **women in rural, semi-urban, and underserved areas** through grassroots mobilization and community-driven education.
- To empower rural women with the skills and **confidence to make informed financial decisions**.
- **Nodal Ministry** - Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

***Phase 1 of Niveshak Didi** was launched in 2022 and more than 55,000 beneficiaries participated in IPPB Financial Literacy Camps across India.*

*Approximately 60% female beneficiaries mostly in the youth & economically active age group.*

- **Launched by** - Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA) and India Post Payments Bank (IPPB).
- **Significance** - It is a **women-centric model** led by almost 40,000 women postal workers trained as Niveshak Didis, who will conduct sessions on **responsible investing, fraud awareness, savings habits, and digital banking tools**.
- It enables them to **build trust, inspire & share financial discipline**, and create a lasting impact at the grassroots level.

***Phase 2** will see the deployment of over 4,000 financial literacy camps across India.*

**Investor Education and Protection Fund Authority (IEPFA)**

- **Established on** - 2016.
- It is a *statutory body*, under the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
- **Vision** - To build a *financially aware and confident India*.
- **Objective** - To ensure that investors across the country are both informed and protected.
- To educate people about their *rights and responsibilities* as investors.

#### • India Post Payments Bank (IPPB)

- **Established on** - 2018, under the Ministry of Communication.
- **Vision** - To build the *most accessible, affordable and trusted bank* for the common man in India.
- **Objective** - To remove barriers for the *unbanked & underbanked* and reach the last mile leveraging the Postal network.
- **Key pillars** - Enabling *Paperless, Cashless and Presence-less banking* in a simple and secure manner at the customers' doorstep.
- **Significance** - It delivers *simple and affordable banking solutions* through intuitive interfaces.

## Reference

[PIB| Launch Phase 2 of Niveshak Didi](#)

## Artemis Accords

**Prelims** - Current events of national and international importance.

**Mains (GS III)** - Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology and issues relating to intellectual property rights.

## Why in news?

Bangladesh recently became the 54<sup>th</sup> nation to sign the Artemis Accords.

- **Aim** - To provide a *non-binding framework of principles* to guide peaceful and cooperative civil space exploration, supporting NASA's Artemis Program.

**NASA's Artemis Program** aims to return humans to the Moon and Mars.

- **Established** - In 2020 by the United States, led by NASA and the U.S. Department of State and 7 other initial signatory nations.
- **Scope** - Applies to civil space activities on the Moon, Mars, asteroids, comets, their orbits, Lagrangian points and transit paths.
- **Signatories** - There are *54 countries* including Bangladesh.
- **India** - *Signed the Accords in 2023* to boost the cooperation between the two nations and explore the domain beyond the boundaries of Earth.

## Core Principles of the Accord

- **Peaceful Exploration** - All activities exclusively for peaceful purposes.

- **Transparency** - Commitment to sharing space policies, plans, and scientific findings by the nations.
- **Implementation** - Through memoranda, government agreements and agency arrangements.
- **Compatibility** - Aligns with the [1967 Outer Space Treaty](#) and other international space law.
- **Safety Zones** - Provides for establishment of safety zones to prevent harmful interference.
- **Space Resources** - Affirms the right to extract and utilize space resources sustainably.
- **Registration** - Requires registration of space objects for identification.
- **Interoperability** - Promotes compatible systems and standards.
- **Space Debris** - Commits signatories to debris mitigation planning.
- **Emergency Assistance** - Provides framework for supporting astronauts in distress.

## Significance

- Represents largest international coalition for space exploration governance.
- Creates practical framework for sustainable lunar presence.
- Facilitates international cooperation while respecting sovereignty.
- Positions signatories for future space economy participation.

## Reference

[NASA | Artemis Accords](#)

## Efficient Air Conditioners (ACs)

**Prelims** - *General issues on Environmental ecology, Bio-diversity and Climate Change.*

**Mains (GS III)** - *Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.*

## Why in news?

*Intense summers and economic growth are driving rapid AC adoption, straining India's power grid, especially during peak hours, making AC efficiency a critical issue.*

## Challenges faced due to Air Conditioners (ACs)

- **Rapid Growth** - India is adding 10-15 million AC units annually, with projections indicating an additional 150 million units over the next decade.
- **Peak Load Crisis** - ACs significantly contribute to peak electricity demand, especially during evening and night-time hours when solar power generation diminishes, but heat persists.

*In May 2024, India's evening peak demand hit a record 240 GW, largely driven*

by cooling needs.

- **Supply-Demand Gap** – Potential shortfall in firm power capacity (reliable 24/7 power) projected as early as 2026, despite overall capacity additions.

### The issues with Current Standards

- **Outdated MEPS** – India's Minimum Energy Performance Standards (MEPS) for ACs, represented by the star rating system, are lagging behind global benchmarks.
- **Inverter AC Gap** – The widely sold inverter (variable-speed) ACs at India's 1-star minimum rating are nearly 50% less efficient than the minimum standards in countries like China and Japan.
- **Lagging International Benchmarks** – China's minimum standard is roughly equivalent to India's highest 5-star rating, meaning a large portion of ACs sold in India would not meet basic requirements in the Chinese market.

### Strategic Importance

- Enhancing AC efficiency acts as a power system reliability safeguard.
- It offers a consumer savings strategy through lower electricity bills.
- Provides an industrial competitiveness lever, potentially positioning India as a leader in efficient cooling technology.

Proposed Roadmap for Higher Efficiency		
Year	Proposed Minimum Efficiency (Indian Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio)	Relevance
2027	5.0 (current 5-star)	India's top-rated models now
2030	6.3	Premium models in Indian market
2033	7.4	Global best-in-class
• The <i>Indian Seasonal Energy Efficiency Ratio (ISEER)</i> is a metric used to assess the energy efficiency of air conditioners, considering seasonal variations in temperature and operating conditions and is a key factor in the BEE (Bureau of Energy Efficiency) star rating system for room air conditioners.		

### Benefits of Efficiency Upgrade

- **Peak Demand Reduction** – Projected to contribute up to 120 GW by 2030 and 180 GW by 2035 to peak demand.
- **Consumer Savings** – Cumulative savings by 2035 projected between ₹66,000 crore to ₹2.25 lakh crore (\$8-\$26 billion) due to reduced electricity bills."
- **Infrastructure Cost Savings** – Avoided investments potentially reaching ₹7.5 lakh crore by 2035 in new power generation and grid infrastructure.
- **Energy Savings** – 120 terawatt hours (TWh) per year by 2035, which is equivalent to 60 GW of solar capacity.
- **Environmental Gains** – Reduced carbon footprint.

### Challenges to Efficiency Adoption

- Higher upfront cost of efficient ACs.
- Low consumer awareness about ISEER ratings.
- Retailer preference for low-efficiency models (higher margins).
- Tenant-owner disconnect (buyers don't pay the electricity bills).
- Absence of strong regulatory push.

## Reference

[The Hindu | Energy Efficiency](#)

## Panchayat Advancement Index

**Prelims** – *Indian Polity and Governance-Constitution, Political System, Panchayati Raj, Public Policy, Rights Issues, etc.*

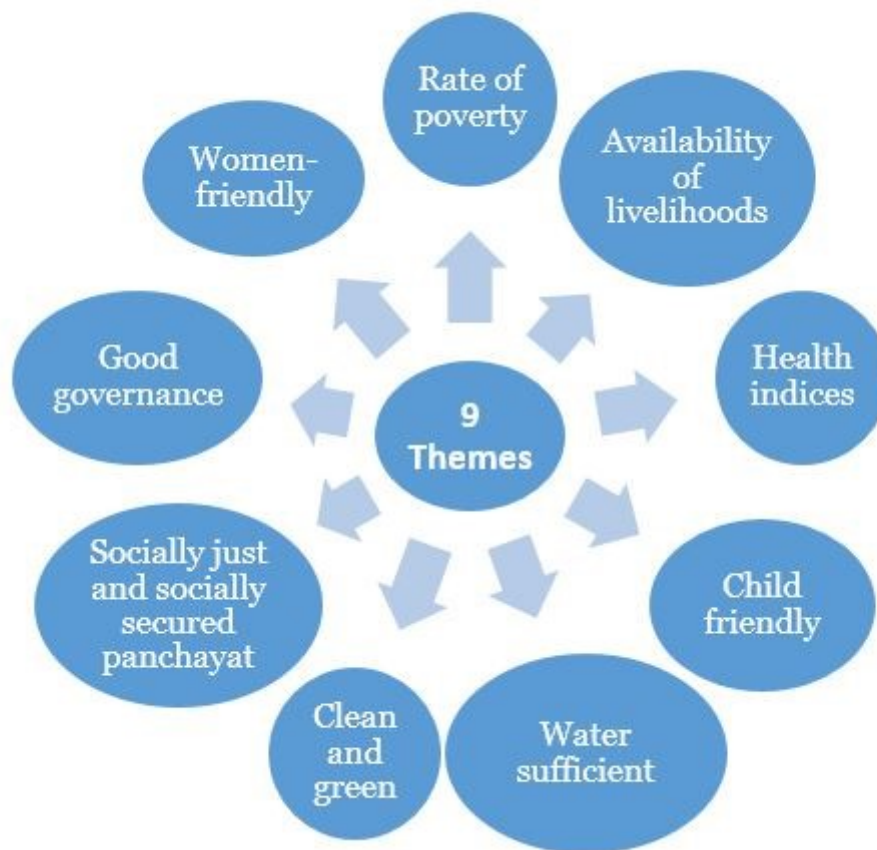
**Mains (GS II)** – *Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance.*

## Why in news?

*In a push for data driven governance, the Department of Panchayati Raj has come up with the first ever Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI).*

- **Panchayat Advancement Index (PAI)** – Aims to assess and measure the progress made by grassroots-level institutions in achieving localized SDGs, thereby contributing to the attainment of SDG 2030.
- It is a multi-domain and multi-sectoral index that is intended to be used to assess the overall holistic development, performance & progress of Panchayats.
- The index takes into account various socio-economic indicators and parameters to gauge the well-being and development status of the local communities within the jurisdiction of a Panchayat.
- **Launched by** – Ministry of Panchayati Raj.
- **9 themes** – PAI has been compiled based on 435 unique local Indicators (331 mandatory & 104 optional) on nine themes.





- These themes align global goals with rural realities, helping local governments tailor their strategies for holistic development.
- **Categories of performance** - Based on these, gram panchayats are grouped into one of the 5 categories of performance
  1. Achiever (90+)
  2. Front runner (75 to below 90)
  3. Performer(60 to below 75)
  4. Aspirant (40 to below 60)
  5. Beginners (below 40)
- **Performance** - The 2022-23 PAI data reveals that out of 2,55,699 Gram Panchayats, 2,16,285 submitted validated data.
- 699 (0.3%) Panchayats emerged as Front Runners, 77,298 (35.8%) were Performers, 1,32,392 (61.2%) were Aspirants while 5,896(2.7%) Gram Panchayats were at the Beginner Level.
- None of the Gram Panchayat was qualified as an Achiever and as of now, no inter-state comparison has been done.
- Gujarat led the index with 346 Gram Panchayat as Front Runners, followed by Telangana with 270 Front Runners.
- States with a high number of Performers include Gujarat, Maharashtra, Telangana along with Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh.
- Bihar, Chhattisgarh, and Andhra Pradesh have a significant share of Aspirant Gram Panchayats.
- **Significance of PAI** - Promotes Evidence-Based Planning.
- Enhances Accountability & Transparency.
- Fosters Competitive Federalism.

- Localizing SDGs.
- Informs Resource Allocation.

## **References**

1. [The Hindu | Panchayat Advancement Index \(PAI\)](#)
2. [PIB | Panchayat Advancement Index \(PAI\)](#)