UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelim Bits 13-05-2025

Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme

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

Why in news?

Bihar has secured the first position in India for successfully implementing the PMFME scheme in the financial year 2024-25.

- **PMFMPE** – It is a ***Centrally Sponsored Scheme*** designed to address the challenges faced by the *micro-enterprises.*
- **Launch** – June 2020
- **Nodal ministry** – Ministry of Food Processing Industries.
- **Objectives** – To support Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), Self Help Groups (SHGs), and Producers Cooperatives along their entire value chain.
- To support upgradation and *formalization of these enterprises.*
- To promote the *unorganized sector of the food processing industry* and enhance competition.
- **Support for Common Infrastructure** – It includes infrastructure such as warehouse, cold storage and common processing facility for processing of ODOP produce.
- **Convergence framework –** The Food Processing Enterprises would be eligible for benefits under the various Government Schemes such as,
    - Start-up Village Entrepreneurship Programme (SVEP)
    - National Rural Livelihood Mission
    - PM MUDRA Yojana and others
- **Branding and marketing support** – It includes marketing training, standardized common branding and packaging, tie-ups with retail chains and state institutions, and quality control to meet required standards.
- **Financial assistance** – The scheme provides financial assistance through subsidies with 35% of their project cost.
- The Financial assistance is eligible for,
    - Farmer Producer Organization (FPO)
    - Self-Help Groups
    - Co-operatives
    - Existing Individual Micro Food Processing Entrepreneurs
    - New Units, whether for individuals or groups would only be supported for One District One Product (ODOP).
- Beneficiaries must contribute at *least 10% of the project cost*, with total investment including working capital up to 20%.
- Bihar has topped the implementation of the scheme with 10,296 applicants has been

approved for loan.
- It will promote industries, employment and community-driven enterprises, especially in agrarian districts of Bihar.

References

1. The Times of India| Bihar tops implementation of PMFME scheme
2. My Scheme| PMFMPE Scheme

Tapti Basin Mega Recharge Project

***Prelims**: Current events of national and international importance| Indian Geography*

Why in news?

Recently Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on May 2025, to implement the Tapti Basin Mega Recharge Project.

- The long pending agreement was finalized during a meeting of the Madhya Pradesh-Maharashtra Inter-State Control Board in Bhopal.

Tapti River
• **Origin** – Multai, Betul district, Madhya Pradesh. • **Length** - 724 km • It flows through Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat and empties into Arabian Sea near Surat, Gujarat. • **Major Tributaries** - **Left bank -** Purna, Girna - **Right bank -** Vaghur, Panjhra

- **Tapti Basin Mega Recharge Project -** The project involves *constructing three canals* in the Tapti River, to address the draught of *Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra*.
- **Objective** - The project channels river water into *the soil and underground aquifers* to raise groundwater levels and help farmers access water through wells and borewells.
- **Funding** - The central government will fund *90% of the project* cost.
    - The remaining *10% will be shared* by the state governments of Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra
- **Canals** - Three canals that are constructed in Tapti River to divert water are,
    - Right Bank Canal (MP)
    - Left Bank Canal (MP)
    - Left Bank Canal (Maharashtra)
- **Water allocation** - Annually 31.13 thousand Million Cubic Feet (TMC) is diverted and shared between as,
    - **Madhya Pradesh** - 11.76 TMC
    - **Maharashtra** - 19.36 TMC
- **Significance** - It will address water needs in *North Eastern* Maharashtra (including

Nagpur) and provide irrigation support to *Southern and South Eastern* districts of Madhya Pradesh.
- The ***Jamghat Project***, part of this initiative, will ensure water supply for Nagpur city for the next 30-40 years.
- It will boost irrigation for Vidarbha and North Maharashtra.
- **Environmentally friendly** - By adopting a groundwater recharge approach instead of traditional reservoir methods, the project minimizes environmental impact and avoids displacement of communities.

References

1. The New Indian Express| Tapti Basin Mega Recharge Project
2. The Hindu| MP Maharashtra ink MoU for Tapti Basin Project

Extended Fund Facility (EFF)

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

Why in news?

Recently the Executive Board of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) decided to allow for "an immediate disbursement" of $1 billion (Rs 8,500 crore) to Pakistan as part of IMF's Extended Fund Facility (EFF) to Pakistan.

- **Extended Fund Facility** – It is a financial assistance program provided by the ***International Monetary Fund*** that is available to all IMF member countries.
- **Objective** - It is designed specifically for countries facing "***serious medium-term balance of payments problems***".
- It means that the countries that are unable to pay for imported goods and services due to ***structural economic weaknesses***.
- **Loan structure** – The *disbursement duration* of the EFF is usually *3 years and it can be extended up to 4 years* in special cases needing deeper structural reforms.
- IMF typically allows for repayment over a period of ***4.5 to 10 years***.
- It provides assistance *only in the form of loans*, not grants or aid.
- It is called "extended" because recipients need more time to implement structural reforms.
- **Accountability framework** – IMF regularly reviews the progress of the country throughout the disbursement period.
- The progress evaluations determine eligibility for subsequent disbursements.
- It also includes formal review processes to monitor progress on *economic stabilization*.
- It focuses on fundamental structural weaknesses such as
    - Inadequate physical infrastructure
    - Insufficiently educated workforce
    - Excessive government borrowing beyond repayment capacity

    - Underdeveloped financial and banking systems
- **Pakistan's EFF**– EFF is extended to Pakistan as the country has been on the brink of bankruptcy with its total GDP has been stagnant over the past decade.
- It is currently under a 37-month EFF approved on September 2024 with ***total approved disbursement of $7 billion.***
    - **Latest tranche** - $1 billion on May 9, 2025

Reference

The Indian Express| IMF loan to Pakistan

Ceasefire Agreement

Prelims*: Current events of national and international importance| Security Issues*

Why in News?

Recently, India and Pakistan have agreed to a ceasefire after the military escalations last week.

- **A ceasefire** – While there is *no official definition* of a ceasefire, Sydney D Bailey, describes it as "***suspension of acts of violence by military and paramilitary forces***, usually resulting from the intervention of a third party."
- It is an agreement between nations involved in a conflict that seeks **to *regulate the termination of all military activity*** "for a given length of time in a given area.
- They also "do *not reflect a juridical end to the state of war*.
- It can either be formally documented, or agreed upon orally.

> *The terms 'truce,' 'armistice,' and 'peace treaties' were used distinctively prior to the introduction of the United Nations Charter in 1945. However, the flexible use of the term 'ceasefire' by the UN itself and the collapse of the pre-Charter concepts led to the use of these terms interchangeably.*

Ceasefire Agreement

• **Timing of commencement** - It specifies the timing (date and hour) when the ceasefire came into force.
• **Identification and definition of prohibited acts** - It may identify 2 types of prohibited acts
  - Military (which includes all acts of military violence)
  - Non-military (such as threats of violence or even propaganda)
• **Physical separation of armed forces** - Separation is used to "maintain the ceasefire and to prevent the potential for renewed military action."
• **Verification, supervision, and monitoring -** This can be achieved *through UN peacekeeping supervision*, joint monitoring commissions or ceasefire commissions, joint commands, and civilian monitoring missions.
• Besides these important terms, it also includes "repatriation of prisoners of war; return of missing — internally displaced persons and refugees; restitution and compensation of claims;" among other measures.

- **Regulation -** A ceasefire in itself or a breach of a ceasefire *does not have any legal consequences* as the agreements are seen as a first step between conflict and peace.

  In times of conflict, humanitarian law remains concerned, mostly, with regulation of the "use of violence and the protection of civilians."

Remedies for a breach of a ceasefire

- They are detailed in the *Regulations Respecting the Law and Customs of War on Land*, also called the ***Hague Regulations***, that were formulated in 1910.
- Article 36 of the Hague Regulations says that if an armistice or a ceasefire does not define its duration, then "the belligerent parties may resume operations at any time, provided that the enemy is warned within the time agreed upon."
- Article 40 says that , a serious breach of a truce by one of the involved parties gives the other a right to denounce it, and in urgent cases, to recommence hostilities immediately.
- Article 41 states that a violation of the ceasefire terms by "private persons acting on their own initiative" authorises the "injured party to demand the punishment of the offenders or, if necessary, compensation for the losses sustained."

Reference

The Indian Express| Concept of Ceasefire Agreement

Delhi Morphological Ridge

***Prelims**: Indian Geography | General issues on Environmental ecology*

Why in News?

Recently, Supreme Court issued show cause notices to senior Delhi government officials for giving nod to the private housing project in the morphological ridge area without proper

consultation with the relevant authorities.

- **The Delhi Ridge** – It is a prominent geological feature and biodiversity hotspot located in NCT of New Delhi.



- It is the *tail-end of the city's ancient Aravalli hill range*, and an ecologically critical zone.

  *Delhi Ridge works as a green lung for the NCT of New Delhi ('**Lungs of Delhi**)' and a natural barrier against hazards such as desertification and pollution.*

- **Morphological Ridge** – It is a ***geologically extended Ridge area*** and an ecologically sensitive zone.
- It is not officially notified as forest land but *enjoys protection* under several High Court and Supreme Court rulings over the past decade.
- Its extent is *based on a Delhi Forest Department map*, which itself based on the seismic zonation map of Delhi 2006, undertaken under the Geological Survey of India (GSI).
- **Features** – The region shares the same physical and ecological characteristics as the officially designated Ridge
  - Rocky Aravalli outcrops, shallow soil layers, and dry thorn forest vegetation.
- This land is often recorded as "gair mumkin pahad" (***uncultivable rocky hil***l) in revenue records.
- It primarily features ***tropical dry thorn forest*** characterised by scattered trees, thorny scrubs and drought-resistant plant species.
- The native species generally exhibit *stunted growth*.
  - **For instance**, bistendu and the broad-leaved dhak, both native to Delhi, are common in such areas.
- **Vegetation** – It varies as one moves from north to south within the Ridge and the Morphological Ridge, reflecting the changes in the soil texture.
  - **The southern Ridge** – It is drier and more rugged, with thinner soils and exposed rocks
  - **The central and northern Ridges** – They have slightly more water-retentive soil and denser vegetation.
- **Regulation** - All land use changes in the Ridge or Morphological Ridge areas require approvals as per the *directive under the M C Mehta vs Union of India case from the*
  - Ridge Management Board (RMB) and

- The Supreme Court-appointed Central Empowered Committee

The ground-truthing and field verification of the Ridge remain incomplete, delaying the final notification of the area as a Reserved Forest under Section 20 of the Indian Forest Act, 1927.

Reference

PIB| Delhi Morphological Ridge

One Liners 13-05-2025
History, Art and Culture
Rash Behari Bose *To evade British authorities, revolutionary Rash Behari Bose escaped India on **May 12, 1915**, boarding the Japanese steamer **"Sanuki Maru"** under the assumed name **P. N. Tagore**. This clandestine departure was crucial for his continued activities abroad.* • **Early Revolutionary Life -** Born in Bengal, Rash Behari Bose was an early revolutionary, skilled in explosives and influenced by anti-British sentiments and figures like Vivekananda. • **Key Conspiracies -** He masterminded the 1912 Delhi-Lahore bomb attack on Viceroy Hardinge and was a key organizer of the unsuccessful 1915 Ghadar Mutiny. • **Escape to Japan (1915) -** To evade arrest after the Ghadar failure, Bose escaped India in May 1915, using the alias P. N. Tagore to board the "Sanuki Maru." • **Activism in Japan -** In Japan, he founded the Indian Independence League (1924, reorganized 1942) to seek support for Indian independence. • **Formation of INA -** Bose crucially formed the first Indian National Army in 1942 with Indian POWs and later passed its leadership to Subhas Chandra Bose in 1943.
Aurangzeb's Invitation *On 12th May 1666, post Treat of Purandhar (1665), Chhatrapathi Shivaji Maharaj accepted Aurangzeb's invitation to Agra, hoping for diplomatic engagement.* • **Humiliation at Court** – Shivaji Maharaj was deeply insulted in Aurangzeb's court, forced to stand behind nobles he had previously defeated in battle. • **Protest** - Feeling profoundly offended by this treatment, Shivaji Maharaj protested vehemently and stormed out of the imperial court. • **Arrest and Imprisonment** - As a consequence of his defiant outburst, Aurangzeb ordered the immediate arrest of Shivaji Maharaj and his young son Sambhaji. • **The Great Escape** – Shivaji Maharaj, refusing to remain captive, meticulously planned and brilliantly executed a daring escape from Agra in August 1666. • **Significance of the Event** – Shivaji Maharaj's bold escape, concealed in sweet baskets, underscores his courage, strategic brilliance, and defiance against Mughal authority.
Polity & Governance

National Legal Services Authority (NALSA)

18. ecently, Justice Surya Kant is appointed Executive Chairman of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), effective May 14, 2025, by the President of India.

• **Appointment Significance -** This appointment strengthens legal aid provision for India's underprivileged, aligning with Article 39-A of the Constitution.

• **Key Details -** Justice Kant succeeds Justice BR Gavai, appointed under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.

• **NALSA's Role -** Established in 1995, NALSA provides free legal services to marginalized populations, focusing on Lok Adalats and legal awareness, as mandated by the Constitution.

• **Impact of Appointment -** Justice Kant's leadership is expected to enhance access to justice, drive institutional reforms, and expand legal outreach programs nationwide.

International Relations and Issues

International Nurses Day 2025

Observed globally on May 12th, IND 2025 emphasizes "Our Nurses. Our Future. Caring for nurses strengthens economies," highlighting the crucial link between nurse welfare and economic resilience.

• **Why This Focus? -** Amidst post-pandemic strain and nurse shortages, the theme calls for urgent investment in nurses' well-being, rights, and support systems worldwide.

• **Core Objectives -** The day aims to promote nurses' health, advocate for improved funding and working environments, and underscore their economic significance.

• **Honoring a Pioneer -** International Nurses Day commemorates Florence Nightingale, the founder of modern nursing, born on this date.

• **Historical Development-** The concept emerged in 1953, and the ICN officially established IND in 1965, setting May 12th as the annual celebration in 1974.

• **Global Acknowledgment -** IND provides a vital platform to recognize the dedication, compassion, and essential contributions of nurses to global healthcare.

Bhutan's Crypto Tourism Leap

Recently, Bhutan has launched the world's first national-level cryptocurrency tourism payment system in collaboration with Binance Pay and DK Bank.

• **Seamless Digital Payments -** Tourists can now use over 100 cryptocurrencies, including BNB and BTC, via the Binance app to pay for various services using QR codes.

• **This initiative aims** - To benefit local artisans and vendors by enabling them to accept crypto payments with just a smartphone, fostering financial inclusion.

• **DK Bank's Crucial Role -** Bhutan's first digital bank, DK Bank, licensed by the Royal Monetary Authority, facilitates instant settlements in local currency, supporting inclusive fintech solutions.

• **Enhanced Tourist Experience -** Travellers can enjoy a cashless, card-free experience with reduced transaction fees and simplified logistics, promoting deeper engagement with local culture.

• **Setting a Global Precedent -** Bhutan's innovative approach could inspire other nations to adopt cryptocurrency for tourism, paving the way for efficient and inclusive travel.

Environment

New Crocodile Species Discovered

Scientists have identified two new crocodile species near Mexico's Yucatán coast, on Cozumel Island and Banco Chinchorro atoll.

• **Discovery Background -** Researchers studying isolated crocodile populations initially thought to be American crocodiles found they were genetically distinct.

• **Research Methodology -** The team used DNA sequencing and anatomical analysis of samples collected from captured and released crocodiles.

• **Key Genetic Findings -** Genetic analysis revealed significant differentiation, establishing the island populations as unique evolutionary lineages, increasing New World crocodile species to six.

• **Population and Threats -** Each new species has fewer than 1,000 breeding individuals, making them highly vulnerable to habitat loss from development and climate change.

• **Future Research -** Further studies will focus on their ecological roles and conservation needs, with continued population monitoring being crucial.

Declining Wolf Population

Indian grey wolves, vital grassland predators, face rapid decline primarily due to increasing threats from feral dogs.

• **Indian Grey Wolves** - This wolf subspecies inhabits scrublands and grasslands, is mainly nocturnal, hunts in small packs, and is adapted to warmer climates.

• **Legal Protection** - Listed as locally endangered in India (IUCN), Appendix I (CITES), and Schedule I of India's Wildlife Act, it has the highest protection status.

• **Feral Dog Threat** - Feral dogs pose a significant threat through disease transmission, hybridization, and competition, impacting wolf populations.

• **Maharashtra Forest Rules -** While allowing removal of trespassing dogs threatening wildlife, forest officials often hesitate due to animal rights concerns, opting for challenging vaccination programs.

• **Kadbanwadi Grassland** - This 2,000-hectare grassland in Maharashtra supports diverse wildlife, including wolves, and highlights the complex human-animal-dog interactions in open ecosystems.

Security

BrahMos Facility Inaugurated

May 11, 2025, Defence Minister virtually inaugurated a Rs 300 crore BrahMos missile production unit in Lucknow's Defence Industrial Corridor.

• **Strategic Importance -** Enhances India's defence self-reliance under "Atmanirbhar Bharat," especially amid regional security concerns and military tensions.

• **Facility aims -** To annually produce 80–100 BrahMos missiles and 100–150 next-generation variants, significantly boosting indigenous missile production.

• **Key Features -** Built on 80 hectares of land provided by Uttar Pradesh, the unit was completed in 3.5 years and will employ around 500 directly.

• **About BrahMos Missile -** A supersonic cruise missile developed by the India-Russia joint venture BrahMos Aerospace, it has a range of 290–400 km and Mach 2.8 speed.

• **Broader Impact -** The project fosters technological growth in Uttar Pradesh, contributes to economic development, and positions Lucknow as a defence manufacturing hub.

Science

National Technology Day
Observed annually on May 11th, this day commemorates significant milestones in India's technological progress.
• **Key 1998 Milestones -** The day marks the Pokhran-II nuclear tests (Operation Shakti), the first flight of "Hansa-3," and the Trishul missile's successful test firing.
• **Official Declaration -** Then Later PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee declared May 11th as National Technology Day in 1998, with annual celebrations commencing in 1999.
• **Organizing Body -** The Technology Development Board (TDB), under DST, organizes the event to promote the commercialization of indigenous technologies.
• **Significance of "YANTRA" -** Derived from ancient Indian traditions, "YANTRA" symbolizes systems thinking, synergistic innovation, and scalable technological solutions.
• **"Yugantar" -** Meaning epochal transformation, reflects India's evolving role from technology adopter to global technology leader.

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