UPSC Daily Current Affairs| Prelim Bits 14-06-2025

Governments Revises GDP Base Year

Prelims *– Economy| Current events of national and international importance.*

Why in news?

The Government of India recently proposed to revise the Gross domestic Product (GDP) base year along with base year of other macro-economic metrics.

- **GDP base year –** The base year is the **reference year** used for comparing GDP figures across years to calculate real (inflation-adjusted) growth.
- **Current base year in India** - **2011–12**.
- **New proposed base year** - **2022–23** (to be implemented from Feb 2026).
- **Industrial Production (IIP)** – The base year for IIP will also be revised **to 2022-23**.
- IIP tracks volume of production in manufacturing, mining, and electricity sectors and it is also used to gauge short-term economic activity and industrial health.
- **Consumer Price Index (CPI)** – The base year for CPI, which is used to assess the rate of inflation faced by consumers, will be revised **to 2023-24**.

Government has constituted Advisory Committee on National Accounts Statistics under the Chairmanship of Biswanath Goldar to oversee and guide the revision of the GDP base year and advise on new methodology, data sources, and estimation techniques.

- **Past GDP base year revisions in India** – It is done 7 times since Independence and it is revised every 10 years, typically choosing years that ended in 1(E.g., 2001, 2011) aligning with census.
- From 1999 onward, the GDP base year was revised **every 5 years** which is based on the recommendation of the National Statistical Commission (NSC).
- 2017–18 is not used as base year due to the disruptions in economic data caused by demonetisation (2016) and GST (2017).

Significance of Base Year Revision

- **Reflect structural economic changes –** It captures economic reality better by inclusion of **emerging industries.**
- **Update data sources** – Inclusion of better and more recent data (like new surveys or digital databases).
- It improves real growth measurement by adjusting inflation more accurately.
- It informs better policymaking by reliable GDP estimates which is essential for

resource allocation.
- Global investors demand credible data as India is nearing status as the 3rd largest economy.

Reference

The Indian Express| Govts Revise GDP Base Year

SEBI's UPI (@valid) & 'SEBI Check'

Prelims – Current events of national and international importance | Economy.

Why in the News?

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) is set to introduce a structured unified payment interface (UPI) address mechanism.

- **UPI (@valid) –** It aims to enhance investor protection and combat unauthorised money collection in the securities market
- It is expected to streamline the ***collection of funds by intermediaries*** from investors.
- It is for registered intermediaries to tackle the rising number of unregistered entities in the stock market that are misleading investors.
- Through this process, investors can identify legitimate Sebi-registered market intermediaries before making payments.
- It will be exclusively allocated by the ***National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)*** only for payment collection by Sebi-registered intermediaries.
- The regulator has made it *mandatory for all intermediaries* to obtain the new UPI IDs. For investors, the use of a structured UPI handle will remain optional.

  NPCI is the umbrella organisation for operating retail payments and settlement systems in the country, that owns and operates the UPI platform.

- **Benefits -** To address the growing issue of impersonation and to enhance investor confidence in the securities market.
- It is designed to proactively curb fraudulent activities, enabling investors to easily identify legitimate Sebi-registered market intermediaries and make payments securely and efficiently.

- **SEBI CHECK -** To provide an additional layer of security and help investors verify the authenticity of an entity before proceeding with any financial transaction.
- This will allow investors to verify the authenticity of UPI IDs either by scanning a QR code or by entering the UPI ID manually.
- The tool will also include a feature to confirm the bank details such as bank account number and Indian Financial System Code (IFSC) of an intermediary.
- Both will be available for use by common investors with effect from October 1, 2025.

References

1. The Indian Express | Sebi's new verified UPI IDs
2. The Hindu | SEBI mandates dedicated UPI address

Boot Camps & Nano-degrees

Prelims – Current events of national and international importance | Education.

Why in News?

There is a shift in education towards boot camps and nano-degrees recently.

- It is a pragmatic, faster, and ***highly targeted alternatives*** built for the demands of a dynamic job market.
- Traditional degree programs often follow a fixed, multi-year structure. They cover broad academic ground, but not always in ways that reflect current job demands.
- In contrast, boot camps and nano degrees offer shorter, modular programs designed around practical outcomes. Learners can choose exactly what, when, and how they want to study.
- Nano-degrees and boot camps are intensive, focused, and are usually completed within a 3 to 6-month timeframe.
- They are particularly well-suited for emerging disciplines such as web development, data analytics, or digital marketing. These programs are often designed with industry alignment in mind.
- These programs cover a wide range of high-demand skills in emerging fields like data science, web development, or blockchain.
- Many of these are offered by digital learning platforms and often in collaboration with major industry players.
- These bite-sized learning options allow students to build customized portfolios of credentials that are faster to earn, lighter on the wallet, and aligned with current hiring trends.
- Some of the leading firms like Google, IBM, and Meta have launched their own certification and nano-degree programs.
- These credentials are gaining recognition and sometimes even outweigh traditional degrees in certain roles.
- **Benefits -** Boot camps and nano-degrees typically last a few months and cost a fraction of a conventional degree.
- They equip learners with job-ready skills that are immediately applicable.
- **Way forward -** Educational institutions now have an opportunity as well as a responsibility to adapt.
- The future will likely belong to hybrid models: traditional degrees combined with industry-recognized micro-credentials, delivered in a bite-sized format.

Reference

The Hindu | Bootcamps & Nano-degrees

Passage Exercise (PASSEX)

Prelims – Current events of national and international importance.

Why in News?

Recently a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) conducted in the North Arabian Sea by The Indian Navy and UK Royal Navy.

- It is a ***multi-faceted naval exercise*** showcasing a shared commitment to maritime security and robust bilateral ties.
- It involved unified control of integral helicopters, tactical manoeuvres, coordinated anti-submarine operations and professional exchange of officers.
- **Participating Nations**
  - **India** - INS Tabar (stealth frigate) and P-8I long-range maritime aircraft.
  - **United Kingdom** - HMS Prince of Wales (aircraft carrier) and HMS Richmond (frigate) of the UK Carrier Strike Group.
- **Objectives** - Enhance collaboration between the Indian and Royal Navies to improve interoperability.
- Strengthen coordination in anti-submarine warfare and conduct joint maritime operations.
- Share expertise and best practices to reaffirm commitment to maritime security in the Indo-Pacific region.
- **Strategic importance** - India-United Kingdom bilateral partnership was upgraded to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership in May 2021, with a 10-year (2030) Roadmap.
- The 2030 Roadmap includes commitments to deepen cooperation on health, climate, trade, education, science and technology, and defence.

Reference

New Indian Express | PASSEX

Salmonella Outbreak

Prelims – Current events of national and international importance | Health.

Why in News?

A salmonella outbreak tied to eggs from a California-based distributor has led to illnesses and hospitalizations across multiple states, according to U.S. health officials.

- Salmonella infection (salmonellosis) is a ***common bacterial disease*** that affects the intestinal tract.
- **Caused by -** It is usually caused by eating raw or undercooked meat, poultry, and eggs or egg products or by drinking unpasteurized milk.
- **Transmission** - Salmonella bacteria typically live in animal and human intestines and

are shed through stool (feces).
- Humans become infected most frequently through contaminated water or food.
- It spreads person-to-person via contaminated hands, surfaces, and utensils.
- Close contact with infected individuals or animals increases risk, especially in poor hygiene conditions.
- **Symptoms**
    - Upset stomach
    - Bloody stool
    - Diarrhea
    - Fever with chills
    - Pain and cramps in belly
    - Nausea and vomiting
    - Headache
    - Loss of appetite
- Some people with salmonella infection have no symptoms.
- Most people develop diarrhea, fever and stomach (abdominal) cramps within 8 to 72 hours after exposure.
- Most healthy people recover within a few days to a week without specific treatment.
- In some cases, diarrhea can cause severe dehydration and requires prompt medical attention.
- **Severity** - Life-threatening complications also may develop if the infection spreads beyond the intestines.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), over a million people in the US get infected, and around 420 deaths are reported each year.

Reference

Hindustan Times | Salmonella outbreak in US

One Liners 14-06-2025

Polity & Governance

Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)

The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has decided to involve experts from empanelled chartered accountancy (CA) firms for the audit of about 350 Central autonomous bodies beginning this year.

• The *CAG will hire external CA firms to audit around 350 Central autonomous bodies*.
• This frees up the CAG's limited internal resources.
• CA experts will work with CAG teams and CAG remains responsible.
• This is *part of the CAG's broader effort to boost its capabilities and adapt to India's economic growth* and the increasing number of audited entities.
• The CAG is also upskilling its audit staff through partnerships with top institutes.

PM e-Bus Sewa-Payment Security Mechanism (PSM) Scheme

• **Purpose** – The scheme aims to accelerate the adoption of electric buses in Indian cities.
• **Key Challenge Addressed** – It tackles the financial risk for private operators and manufacturers by guaranteeing payments for e-bus services.
• **Working mechanism (Payment Security)** – A dedicated fund (3,435.33 crore rupees outlay) is established.
• If Public Transport Authorities (PTAs) default on payments to e-bus operators, Convergence Energy Services Limited (CESL) pays from this fund.
• CESL then recovers the defaulted amount from the PTAs/State governments.
• Impact – This financial safety net encourages private investment in e-bus procurement and operation.
• **Target** – The scheme aims to support the deployment of over 38,000 electric buses across India from FY 2024-25 to FY 2028-29.
• **Coverage** – Provides payment security for up to 12 years.
• **Broader Goals** – Aligns with India's move towards sustainable, green urban mobility, reducing emissions and boosting public transport capacity.

International Relations and Issues

Iran's Nuclear Programme

Recently, the UN nuclear watchdog's Board of Governors voted that Iran's nuclear program had breached a 1974 agreement, a first since 2006.

• **Enrichment Process** – Nuclear weapons require uranium enriched to 90%+ U-235. Iran uses centrifuges for this.
• **Past & Current Enrichment** – By 2010, Iran had 19.75% enriched uranium.
• After the U.S. left the 2015 nuclear deal (JCPOA) in 2018, Iran boosted enrichment to 60%, a critical threshold.
• **Weapons Capability** – Enriching from 60% to 90% requires significantly less effort.
• Experts estimate Iran could potentially produce weapons-grade uranium and a functional warhead within months, possibly even weeks, once 60% enriched uranium is available.
• **Uranium Stockpiles** – Some estimates suggest Iran already possesses enough uranium for 5-8 nuclear warheads.
• **Israel's Stance** – Israel, believed to be a nuclear state, has stated it won't hesitate to bomb Iran's nuclear facilities if necessary.

India-EU Foreign Trade Agreement

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar recently announced that India and the European Union are making progress towards a "comprehensive, balanced, and meaningful" Free Trade Agreement (FTA).

• **Elevated Strategic Partnership** – Both sides agree that the FTA will significantly elevate their strategic partnership, which is rapidly expanding.

Broader EU-India Engagement

• During his visit, Mr. Jaishankar also met with Jozef Sikela, EU's Commissioner for International Partnerships, discussing several key areas:
- **New Strategic Agenda** – Discussions covered the new EU-India Strategic Agenda.
- **Connectivity and IMEC** – Focus was placed on advancing connectivity initiatives, including the India-Middle East-Europe Corridor Project (IMEC).
- **Global Gateway Priorities** – Joint priorities under the Global Gateway initiative, such as clean energy, sustainable urbanization, and enhanced connectivity, were discussed.
- **Trilateral Cooperation** – A trilateral cooperation arrangement was signed, expected to benefit the Global South.

Economy

India's FY26 growth forecast

The World Bank has reduced India's growth forecast for FY 2025-26 to 6.3%. This is down from its January projection of 6.7%.

• The *cut of 0.4 percentage points is due to dampened export growth* (from weaker global activity and trade barriers) and a slowdown in investment growth (due to global policy uncertainty).
• This new forecast, released on June 10, 2025, is lower than the RBI's 6.5% prediction for the same period.
• Despite the downgrade, the *World Bank expects India to remain the fastest-growing major economy*.
• Growth is projected to rise again in FY27 and FY28 to an average of 6.6% annually, driven partly by strong services activity.
• *Globally, the World Bank forecasts growth to slow to 2.3% in 2025*, the weakest since 2008 (excluding recessions), due to increased trade tensions and policy uncertainty.

Environment

Species in Chilika Lake

• **Irrawaddy Dolphins** – Highly endangered, shy, and elusive dolphins characterized by a rounded nose.
• They are related to killer whales and typically only show their fins or upper body when surfacing.
Chilika Lake *situated in Odisha is India's largest brackish water lake, and Asia's second largest.*
• Birds
- Black-tailed Godwits
- Pied Kingfisher
- Brahminy Kite
- Indian Spot-billed Duck
- Grey-headed Swamphen
- Whiskered Tern
- Chilika is a haven for both resident and migratory birds.

Eurasian Otter

The Eurasian otter was recently spotted in the Lidder River in Srigufwara, south Kashmir.
• Totapuri, also known as Bangalore or Sandersha, is a popular mango cultivar.
• **Global Status** – The Eurasian otter is classified as '*Near Threatened*' globally by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
• **Once Thought Extinct in Kashmir** – For around *three decades*, the Eurasian otter (locally known as 'Vuder') was believed to be extinct in Kashmir.
• It was once abundant in the Valley's water bodies and a traditional part of the local ecosystem.
• **Rare Sighting** – A recent, rare sighting has occurred in the **Lidder River in Srigufwara, south Kashmir**.
• Villagers initially mistook it for a crocodile.
• Wildlife officials confirmed it as a Eurasian otter after reviewing videos and photographic evidence, and subsequently through CCTV surveillance.
• **Historical Presence in Kashmir** – Historically, significant otter populations were found in Dachigam, streams feeding Dal Lake, Rambiara stream, and the *Lidder River*.
• **Reasons for Decline** – The sudden disappearance of otters was attributed to:
• Increased water pollution.
• Hunting for their fur.
• **Revived Hopes** – This sighting is highly encouraging for wildlife officials.
• It's the **third reported sighting in Kashmir this year**, with others in Gurez Valley (May) and Heerpora (Shopian district).
• The return of the Eurasian otter could play a vital role in **restoring Kashmir's aquatic ecology**.

Security

PASSEX Exercise (Indian and U.K. Navies)

• **Location** - North Arabian Sea.
• **Participants** – The Indian Navy and the United Kingdom's Royal Navy.
• Indian Navy vessels:
  - Stealth frigate INS Tabar
  - An Indian Navy submarine
  - P-8I maritime patrol aircraft
• U.K. Navy Assets:
  - Aircraft carrier HMS Prince of Wales (part of their Carrier Strike Group)
  - Frigate HMS Richmond
• **Exercise Components** – The multi-faceted exercise included:
  - Unified control of integral helicopters.
  - Tactical maneuvers.
  - Coordinated anti-submarine operations.
  - Professional exchange of officers.
• **Significance** – Demonstrates deepening cooperation between the two navies.
• Showcases a shared commitment to maritime security.
• Highlights robust bilateral ties and dedication to a secure and stable maritime environment.

Miscellaneous

Totapuri Mango

Recently, Chittoor district in Andhra Pradesh banned the entry of Totapuri mangoes from other states, specifically impacting Karnataka.

• Totapuri, also known as Bangalore or Sandersha, is a popular mango cultivar.
• **Appearance** – Distinctive for its elongated shape and a unique "parrot beak-like" tip.
• **Key Use** – Highly valued for its juice and pulp. It's widely used in mango drinks by major food and beverage processors, including multinational companies.
• **Growing Regions** – *Primarily cultivated in the border districts of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Tamil Nadu*.
• **Processing Hub** – Andhra Pradesh's Chittoor district is a significant hub for mango processing and pulp extraction units, which procure Totapuri mangoes.
• **Reason for Ban** – Andhra Pradesh claims the ban is to protect its local farmers.
• Karnataka's Totapuri mangoes are cheaper (₹5-₹6/kg) than AP's (₹8/kg, plus a ₹4/kg government incentive). If cheaper mangoes enter, AP farmers fear distress.

US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)

A team of NTSB investigators is traveling to India to assist the Aircraft Accident Investigation Bureau (AAIB) with the probe (Air India Express plane crash near Ahmedabad).

• **Mission** – To make transportation safer by conducting objective investigations, studying safety issues, and advocating for safety recommendations.
• **Independence** – A congressionally mandated *independent agency*, crucial for unbiased investigations.
• **Structure** – Governed by *five Board Members*, nominated by the President and confirmed by the Senate for 5-year terms.
• A Chairman and Vice Chairman are also designated.
• **History** – Traces its origins to the *Air Commerce Act of 1926*, which tasked the U.S. Department of Commerce with investigating aircraft accidents. It gained full independence in 1974.
• **Scope** – Investigates civil aviation accidents, along with significant incidents in railroad, highway, marine, and pipeline transportation.

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